

[Policy]

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Relationships:

Eri & Midoriya Izuku, Aizawa Shouta | Eraserhead & Midoriya Izuku, Aizawa Shouta | Eraserhead & Tsukauchi Naomasa, Aizawa Shouta | Eraserhead & Eri, Midoriya Izuku & Tsukauchi Naomasa, Aizawa Shouta | Eraserhead/Yamada Hizashi | Present Mic, Bakugou Katsuki & Midoriya Izuku, Aizawa Shouta | Eraserhead & Shinsou Hitoshi, Shinsou Hitoshi & Yamada Hizashi | Present Mic, Midoriya Izuku & Shinsou Hitoshi, Midoriya Izuku & Toga Himiko, Class 1-A & Shinsou Hitoshi, Minor or Background Relationship(s), Aizawa Shouta | Eraserhead & Shinsou Hitoshi & Yamada Hizashi | Present Mic, Dabi & Midoriya Izuku, Dabi & Midoriya Izuku & Toga Himiko, Iida Tenya & Uraraka Ochako, Ashido Mina & Kaminari Denki & Sero Hanta, background Ashido Mina/Kaminari Denki/Sero Hanta, background Asui Tsuyu/Uraraka Ochako, background Jirou Kyouka/Yaoyorozu Momo, Midoriya Izuku/Shinsou Hitoshi/Todoroki Shouto

Characters:

Midoriya Izuku, Eri (My Hero Academia), Aizawa Shouta | Eraserhead, Tsukauchi Naomasa, Dabi (My Hero Academia), Shinsou Hitoshi, Bakugou Katsuki, Yamada Hizashi | Present Mic, Yagi Toshinori | All Might, Sludge Villain (My Hero Academia), for like. a second and then he's gone, Toga Himiko, Class 1-A (My Hero Academia), League of Villains (My Hero Academia)

Additional Tags:

Morally Grey Midoriya Izuku, Implied/Referenced Child Abuse, Implied/Referenced Character Death, Quirkless Midoriya Izuku,

Vigilante Midoriya Izuku, Midoriya Izuku Does Not Have One for All Quirk, Midoriya Izuku Does Not Go to U.A. High School, Smart Midoriya Izuku, Strong Midoriya Izuku, BAMF Midoriya Izuku, Cute Eri (My Hero Academia), Informant Midoriya Izuku, Parental Aizawa Shouta | Eraserhead, Angst with a Happy Ending, Fluff and Angst, Bakugou Katsuki Swears A Lot, Bakugou Katsuki is Bad at Feelings, Adopted Shinsou Hitoshi, Trans Male Character, Non-Binary Kaminari Denki, Fluff, Angst, Midoriya Izuku is a Ray of Sunshine, Alternate Universe - Coffee Shops & Cafés, Alternate Universe - Canon Divergence, Mild Hurt/Comfort, Aizawa Shouta Says Trans Rights, Married Aizawa Shouta | Eraserhead/Yamada Hizashi | Present Mic, Queerplatonic Relationships, Midoriya Izuku is a Good Friend, Asexual Iida Tenya, cliffhanger ending, but don't worry there's gonna be another book, Shinsou Hitoshi Replaces Mineta Minoru, Midoriya Izuku's Hair Is Fluffy Because It's Full Of Secrets

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Part 2 of [Net Neutrality](#)

Collections:

Creative Chaos Discord Recs, Long Fics to Binge, Got 99 problems but these ain't one, Tigress_Den_Of_Amazing_FanFictions, Storycatchers' pile of heroic hero stuff, Genius bnha fanfics, Fave Fics Found, Real Good Shit, Pacing's bests, DerangedDeceiver's Favorite Fics, Quality Fics, completed and read, Void's BNHA Favorites :D, [Izuku and his Collection of Dads](#), Fics that soothe my soul at 4am, FreakingAmazingFics, FinishedBooks, My morning bnha tea, 1Ids a Bitter's Life Sweetener, fics to sink your teeth into, Banco Fic, traumastudents, BaNHAMmer, BNHA Fics *chef's kiss* [100](#) [100](#) [100](#), Villain_vigilante_stories, Finished favourites, Best BNHA Fics, BNHA fanfics that I would read again, fuckin a, BNHA fics that give me a will to live, [I don't have a personal life](#), hixpatch's all time favorites, Whole Ass Novels, Bnha fanfic who has my heart, Adore Able's Server MHA Vigilante!Izuku Collection, The Collossally Curious Collection of Carefully Curated Stories, [Chris's Best Izuku Fics](#), Everything so far, [BNHA FICS I LOVE](#), THE [UBIQ](#) [THE UNIQUE](#), elian's favorites <3, BNHA/MHA, [Lux's fav fics](#), bookworx26's marvelous collection of BNHA fics, Behold the Sacred Texts, Fics that somehow keep me alive, [zawa](#), mha fics that are my will to live, MHA Fics I Dream About

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[Policy]

by [Teobot](#)

Summary

Aizawa Shouta arrives at the crime scene and the first thing he sees is Officer Tamakawa Sansa puking up his guts on the other side of his squad car. That's attractive.

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Aizawa Shouta is tasked with finding and arresting the Shie Hassaikai killer. If he's going to do it, however, he's going to need information, something that seems to be in short supply for this particular case.

Fortunately for him, there's a new face in the underground info business - well, a new face in the sense that somebody's been supplying good info to both sides. Tentatively given the name 'Harbinger', this broker supposedly knows more than the internet.

Unfortunately for him, Harbinger doesn't seem to want to help him out. Go figure. More work for him.

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[Direct Sequel to Content]

Notes

hhhey guys here's the second installment of Net Neutrality, I hope you like it

Chapter 1

Chapter Summary

hhhey guys here's the second installment of Net Neutrality, I hope you like it

Chapter Notes

edited 4.8.20

Aizawa Shouta arrives at the crime scene and the first thing he sees is Officer Tamakawa Sansa puking up his guts on the other side of his squad car. *That's* attractive.

He turns away and searches the crowd of law-enforcement personnel for Detective Tsukauchi, the one who called him here - a request to his agency as a friend.

It's not incredibly difficult to spot the familiar trench coat and fedora, so he slips past officers and taps the man on the shoulder. Tsukauchi turns around and sighs in what seems to be relief.

"Eraserhead."

"Detective." He pauses. "Why am I here?"

Tsukauchi sighs again, noticeably heavier this time. Well fuck - this is going to be a fun playdate, isn't it?

"I'm not going to lie." Good. "It's a bloodbath in there." Tsukauchi gestures to the minka. Huh. Not fun then. "We have next to no clue what happened," he continues, "other than that everyone who lived here is dead and someone ransacked the main lab." Ah. "We need your expertise. You know the underground, you might be able to help us with this."

Aizawa doesn't hesitate much. In his field, a second can equal a life. Hesitance kills.

He doesn't hesitate now.

"Absolutely. Give me a second here to notify my agency that I'm taking this, and then I'll be right there." He doesn't wait for Tsukauchi to respond as he pulls out his phone, shooting off a text to his patrol

coordinator. She'll make sure his routes are covered and his schedule cleared. He shoves his phone back in his pocket.

Shouta looks back up at Tsukauchi through his goggles and nods.

"Show me what we've got."

-

Tsukauchi wasn't fucking around when he said that it was a bloodbath. Shit, Sansa wasn't even overreacting when he heaved up whatever was left of his last meal next to the squad car. But what really hits him, what really unnerves him, isn't the blood. It's the fatal blows.

One bullet per person. All kill shots. All guns are illegal in Japan, so they have connections to the underground. He keeps a running commentary for Tsukauchi, who nods at appropriate intervals but otherwise stays quiet.

One bullet per person, with two notable exceptions: Chisaki Kai and Kuroho Hina, who both have puncture wounds through their right eyes, right into their brains.

Whoever did this had a serious fucking issue with these two, and they weren't afraid to show it up close and personal. What a shitshow.

"Detective," he calls. Tsukauchi looks over at him with curious eyes. "These are the Shie Hassaikai guys you were investigating, right?"

Tsukauchi purses his lips and turns away from him.

"Yes," he answers tersely. "That's what they called themselves; the 'Eight Precepts of Death'. The only reason we didn't get them ourselves is the lack of a paper trail. Nothing on the books we could catch them with, and we can't file for search warrants without proof.

Aizawa snorts. "I don't think whoever did this was super concerned with things like 'paper trails' and 'proof'."

Tsukauchi hums his agreement. "I'm inclined to agree."

Shouta looks around the room of Chisaki Kai with disdain gritting against him like sand in his mouth. It's in a near clinical state of sterility, with no pictures or personal affects in sight. It *screams* paranoia and that one personality disorder he can never remember the

name of.

And then there's the fact that there's almost no sign of anyone but them entering the room, save for the smudge of blood on Chisaki's cheek. Unfortunately for them, the perp had been wearing gloves - news given to them by an officer who had come up from the lab - so no fingerprints.

In fact, there's almost no sign of any damage from a break in, which is unusual. In cases like this, there's almost always some sort of property damage, but here there isn't so much as a broken lock or a window pane out of place.

Shit, there isn't even any CCTV, because everything around the compound is low-security residential.

Well.

Was low-security residential; any sane person is either gonna go doomsday or pack up their shit and scam. He knows damn well Hizashi would be boxing up the apartment in a second if something like this happened near their apartment.

"Detective!"

A familiar voice from the hall startles them both.

"Sansa," Tsukauchi calls back, "what is it?"

Officer Tamakawa's head pokes in, ears up and fur puffed in what looks like irritation, if what Shouta knows from his own cats holds true.

"The guy who called us called the vultures too, and they're outside the line." Tamakawa's face twists up in displeasure. "They're asking for a statement." He looks over at Shouta and visibly brightens. "Hey, Eraserhead! Didn't know you were here! Glad to see you're working with us!" His head disappears back through the door.

Shouta looks over to Tsukauchi, who's pinching the bridge of his nose. He hears a soft, "Fuck," and snorts.

"Well," Shouta mutters, "it seems that the 'vultures' have arrived. You wanna hear what I've got before you go make your official statement?"

Tsukauchi nods, not lifting his face, and Shouta clears his throat.

“Alright. Well, I don’t think they’ve got a transformation quirk, or a mutation. I think it’s most likely an emitter. Based on the lack of residue, it doesn’t produce anything - so it’s probably mental or physical, but I’d say there’s a better chance of it being physical. Maybe an enhancer, solely based on how many people were killed within the window.

“There’s clearly some sort of emotional connection, seeing as Chisaki and Kurono were paid special attention. A grudge, maybe, or revenge for something. But this wasn’t blind anger. It wasn’t a rampage.” Shouta pauses, trying to figure out a tactful way to say ‘yeah, this perp planned and executed the murder of more than 150 people; people who were criminals, sure, but were still people, and I’ve got no fucking clue why.’

“This was premeditated mass murder without an immediately visible motive,” he says. “The only thing I can say with confidence is that this person got exactly what they wanted, and that they covered their tracks incredibly well.”

Tsukauchi, who probably already knows this, hisses through his teeth as he looks up at the ceiling.

“*Dammit*,” he whispers, loud enough for Shouta to hear.

“Yeah,” Shouta responds. “Dammit is right. I’ll start looking around tomorrow with my underground contacts to see if they know anything. If I can’t find anything with them, there’s a new guy in the area. I’ll call you if I find anything.”

Tsukauchi doesn’t look at him as he leaves the room, ready to head home for the night. Damn.

He hopes he can find something before this guy hits again.

He hopes, a little bit quieter, that he can find something before this guy disappears.

-

Shouta watches from his couch as Tsukauchi gives his statement to the news. Twisting his words about the perp’s quirk is a good idea, he notes blandly. Make the killer feel confident that their quirk won’t be identified, make them feel confident enough to slip up, leave

something behind.

He looks over at Hizashi and sighs. His husband is sleeping on the cushion next to him, one leg in his lap and the other over the back of the couch. His arms are askew and his hair is down, half of it lying over his face and the other half spread behind his head. Hitoshi's already in bed, so it's just him that's awake.

He sighs again and switches off the TV, standing - gently lifting Hizashi's leg and setting it down on the couch - and stretching. His back pops and he huffs; he's going to have to drag his dumbass husband all the way to their room, hope the cat hasn't eaten his pillowcase again, and find some way to fall asleep.

He slides his arms under Hizashi and gently lifts him, princess style, trying not to wake him up. He grunts over the not insignificant weight of his husband as he makes his way to their room - though he's lanky, Hizashi is mostly muscle and muscle is heavy.

He nudges the door open with his foot and fucking *dammit*, Bastard's shredded his pillowcase again.

"Fucking asshole cat," he grumbles under his breath, laying Hizashi down on the sheets. He's already in his pyjamas - has been since around noon - so Shouta doesn't have to worry about changing and just throws the duvet over him.

Aizawa himself is still in his work clothes, so he strips - shirt, socks, pants, boxers - and heads to the master bathroom to shower. He needs to get a handle on how he's going to approach this. A mass murder with only one clue: whatever was taken from the compound.

If they can find what's missing, they can trace it. They'll have their killer behind bars.

If they can't find what's missing, they can't trace it and they'll have the killer out in the streets.

Aizawa stands under the hot water, letting it beat down on him.

Fuck. What a mess.

Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

ik it's short.... I'm working on the next chapter tho so don't worry!!

edited 4.8.20

Midoriya Izuku's heart broke the first time Kacchan put a starburst scar on his arm.

Wait, no. That's not right. It was earlier than that.

Much earlier.

Oh, his heart didn't break when everyone told him that he couldn't be a hero. His heart didn't break when Kacchan decided they weren't friends anymore. His heart didn't even break when Dr. Tsubasa told him he was quirkless.

No, his heart broke when Midoriya Inko- when Mom told him she was *sorry*. Like it was somehow her fault he wasn't powerful, like it was her fault he was weak.

Like it was her fault he was useless.

It was hard to come to terms with. A dream so incredibly integral to childhood isn't so easily choked out, which is why when he saw the white-haired child for the first time, his heart *burned*. Its shattered pieces shuddered and twitched, snarling at the injustice. They found a focus.

A focus named Eri.

For her, the title 'Vigilante' feels just as good as 'Hero'.

Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

Aizawa, Izuku, and Eri? All in the same place? Sounds about right.

Side note: we haven't yet caught up to where we ended in [Content], but I'm planning on getting there in either the next chapter or the one after that, so never fear! We'll catch up, I promise!

Chapter Notes

edited 4.8.20

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

The café Shouta has been going to for, like, *ever*, is in a really shitty spot, but it's a damn good café. And because he's good at his job (go figure), he notices when the owner - a good-hearted slip of a kid named Midoriya Izuku - starts closing up early. It doesn't bother him.

Really, it doesn't.

But he gets a little irked when the shop starts closing on Sundays, too, and he gets a little more irked as it continues for an entire fucking month. The whole Shie Hassaikai clusterfuck is really getting on his nerves, and it doesn't help that he's gotten next to the ass up of nowhere in catching the fucker that slaughtered an entire yakuza syndicate.

Honestly, all he wants is coffee on a chilly February Sunday. Fuck.

And then he walks in one Monday afternoon (he gets afternoons off right now because he works the night shift), and out comes the reason the café's been cutting back on hours.

Shit, he's really an asshole. He very suddenly feels the need to apologize to Midoriya, even though an apology wouldn't make sense to the kid.

Because the reason the shop's been closing early is probably the shoeless little girl sitting in one of those plush, god-awful maroon chairs that does wonders for his back.

She's a tiny little thing, with a shock of long, white hair and a sizable horn on the side of her head. She's in a blue tank-top dress with a mint green skirt, and her arms and legs are covered in bandages.

Dammit.

She looks up at the sound of him walking in, and she's got that deer-in-the-headlights look that he only really gets when he's found his students doing something wrong. She locks eyes with him and goes completely still. He doesn't even think she's breathing. The fear in her eyes is primal and her pupils have blown wide, almost eclipsing the red iris.

He knows this look. He's seen it in Hitoshi, and it's the look he gave his father when-

"Eri," calls Midoriya from the kitchen, and the spell is broken. Her eyes leave him reluctantly and wander to where Midoriya's voice came from. "The muffins are ready!" Shouta's eyes stay on her and he doesn't move from the entrance - doesn't want to spook her.

Midoriya walks into the shop proper and completely ignores him, and that's... a bit unexpected, actually. The beatific smile he carries around him is calmer, gentler for the girl - Eri, he now knows. Midoriya makes his way around the counter and walks over to where she's sitting in the chair.

"I know you were disappointed about not getting to take them out of the oven, but now they're cooled and we can eat them! You get the first one, though, because you did most of the work." Midoriya slowly stretches out his hand, and just as slowly, Eri takes it.

Shouta feels like he's intruding.

Midoriya helps her out of the loveseat, and finally glances back at Shouta.

One second please, he mouths, and takes Eri into the kitchen. Shouta slowly breaths out and makes his way over to the bookshelf, slumping down into the loveseat that's so overstuffed that it swallows him.

Fuck. That was... a lot. He's never seen Midoriya like that, and he's been coming to this café for five years now.

He closes his eyes and goes over what he just saw.

Little girl named Eri, bandaged all over. She looked at him and he *knows* that look, hates it with a passion. Midoriya came in, banished her fear, rescued her from a situation in which she'd be uncomfortable. Midoriya then silently promises to explain.

The café's been closing early for about a month now. And he's been complaining about it.

(Only in his head, of course. He'd never say anything to Midoriya. He's a foul-mouthed bastard, but he's not needlessly cruel.)

Midoriya comes back into the room, sans Eri, and begins making Aizawa's usual: nothing he's tried before. It's easy, it's called the Inko Special (because Mrs. Midoriya put small Midoriya in charge of the coffee), and it's an unholy amalgamation of whatever Midoriya wants to mix up. It gets him through school days in the morning, and it gets him through his night shifts. Thinking about it now, it seems like every time he orders it, it gets better. Hmm. Must be a Midoriya thing.

The espresso machine beeps and it's always been a calming thing to watch drinks being made. Midoriya pours and mixes and stirs, and the resulting drink arrives to him in a mug that's more a bowl that gets set on the little table next to his seat.

"She's upstairs now," says Midoriya. He hums, curling his fingers around the warm cup and taking a sip. This time, it's raspberry and orange and heavy cream.

Perfect fucking coffee.

"Who is she?"

Midoriya sighs and fixes his eyes on the doorway. Shouta stares at the boy over the rim of his cup, observing.

"She's my cousin, Akatani Eri."

It's either the truth or Midoriya has gotten exceptionally good at lying, and he's seen the boy try to lie. Shouta accepts the name and doesn't bother picking at it.

"My mom's sister, Miku, had a one night stand, got pregnant, and had her. She left Eri with the guy and ditched, and he was... awful. He was in a work accident and died, and so Eri had to come to somebody. The people in charge of finding her a home couldn't find Miku, so they called Mom. She came here, but since Mom's in America with

Dad, she lives with me.” Midoriya’s face has been growing progressively more clouded, and his eyes are full of tears as he looks at Shouta. Honestly, he almost doesn’t want to hear the rest of the story.

“That man-” Midoriya’s voice breaks as tears start to dribble down his cheeks, “-he was *awful* to her. She’s four now, this last December, and he would hurt her with his quirk. He’d cut her up and then patch her back together, and he’d do it over and over and over again. She wouldn’t talk to me for two weeks, Mr. Aizawa! She only told me her name, and she thought I was gonna treat her like he did, and I think she still thinks that... I-I don’t know what to do.”

Shouta doesn’t speak for a bit. Tears continue to dribble down Midoriya’s cheeks, and his eyes drop to the ground.

“That man, you said he’s dead?”

Midoriya nods. “Yeah. I think it was a head injury, but he’s definitely gone now.” Midoriya shivers and curls in on himself a bit. “We don’t know where Miku is, and we don’t want to know. She abandoned Eri, so we don’t want to talk to her.”

Shouta nods. People are fucking terrible, and he wouldn’t want to talk to her either. “Eri will be cautious around you for a while, but what you did just now? That was perfect.”

Midoriya perks up at that, looks at him. “R-really?”

Shouta nods. “Yeah. I’ve seen cases like hers before, and I’ve read up on how to deal with the aftermath of abuse. Shit, kid, I’m a dad myself, and I’ve got a kid who was in a similar situation to Eri, although not to that extent.” Midoriya’s eyes are wide, and he’s listening intently. Shouta almost feels uncomfortable with the amount of focus on him, but he needs to reassure the kid.

“Listen, Midoriya, you have to be gentle with kids like her. You have to be patient. Give her time to feel comfortable with you.” Shouta keeps his voice low and even. “She’s been hurt very badly, and she’s probably waiting for it to happen again. Just don’t give her a reason to think it would.”

Midoriya nods slowly, looking at the bookshelves. “Okay,” he whispers. “I can do that.”

Shouta grins and narrows his eyes at the boy. “And Midoriya...”

“Yes?”

“Your shirt is terrible.”

Midoriya snorts, and the mock offence that crosses his face immediately drains the tension from the room. He places a hand over his chest, right on tip of the text that reads ‘Business Casual’, and huffs, smiling.

“My shirt is absolutely fine, thank you very much,” he insists, pouting. “Mr. Aizawa, I’ll have you know that my very own mother bought me this shirt. By insulting it, you are insulting her, and if you don’t want me to tell on you then I suggest you apologize.” Shouta barks out a laugh as Midoriya snuffles again and wipes at his eyes. “But thank you. I really appreciate your advice, sir. It helps a lot.”

Aizawa clears his throat, feeling oddly emotional, and looks away.

“Any time, kid. It’s kind of my job to help people in need, you know that.”

He turns back in time to see Midoriya give him his trademarked sunshine smile, and takes another sip of his coffee. Perfect coffee, perfect chair, good kids; for where he’s at in the investigation, today has been unusually bright.

“Yeah, I know. Thank you anyways, Mr. Aizawa.”

-

Midoriya Izuku looks at the phone he’s holding in his hand. Eri is in his room, hopefully deep asleep, and he’s in his office-lab.

His thumb hovers over the *call* button, and he looks at the contact name, trying to decide how he needs to do this.

Izuku presses *call*, and Midoriya Inko picks up on the second ring.

“Hey sweetie, what’s up?”

“... Mom?”

“Yes, dear?”

“I need you to do something for me.”

Chapter End Notes

god I'm planning things and I'm so excited you guys holy heck

another side note: it feels too short? I'll try to write longer updates, this week was just super full and took up most of my writing time

Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

Early March.

Chapter Notes

hey guys! if you see any spelling errors or grammar mistakes, please tell me! this week has been kinda hazy, and this chapter came out in, like, one night. thank you!

mildly important note at the end tho, so please read it

edited 4.8.20

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

A week after their talk, the café starts opening back up on Sundays.

Two weeks after that, the café stops closing early - but it only goes to 10, instead of the 11 it used to.

(Shouta doesn't actually mind that as much as he thinks he does. The kids need to sleep, and his coffee dependence doesn't need any more encouragement.)

About a week after that, Shouta finds himself the recipient of a beaming grin that nearly blinds him. Apparently the night before Eri had finally looked Midoriya in the eye. He accepts his coffee gratefully and thinks about Hizashi and Hitoshi.

He should... bring them over. Introduce them.

It would do Hitoshi good to see another child recovering, and it'd do Midoriya some good to connect to another kid his age. Hisashi would adore them both. He decides, however, to wait a bit - let Eri become more comfortable around people. She's still not completely accustomed to Midoriya, and formally introducing a near-stranger and his family wouldn't do her any good. He pays for his drink and sets off again, mind up in space.

May arrives before Shouta gets his first maybe-break in the case. He's been scouring the underground for any scraps of information, but it seems that everyone is afraid to talk about it. Then he hears a

whisper, a rumor, an utterance from one of his sources that tells him that the Shie Hassaikai were working on quirk suppressants, and there's a stash just outside of Musutafu.

That informant doesn't show up to their next meeting.

Instead, the new 'face' that's been making the rounds starts stirring. Shouta calls in a few low-level favors and has them feel out the new guy (he's been told that the new face presents male) who's been given the tentative name of 'Harbinger'.

As it turns out, Harbinger has info. Lots of it.

In fact, Harbinger has so much information on literally everything - from in-depth quirk analysis to the inner mechanisms of the precinct - that when he calls Tsukauchi, he's told to hold back on arranging a meeting.

"Aizawa, we don't know anything about him. We'll follow the Musutafu lead, but we need to have literally nowhere else to go before we involve another loose cannon." Tsukauchi sighs and the sound is distorted over the line. "Just... focus on looking for information on Overhaul. When there's nothing else you can do, *then* you can look into this 'Harbinger' guy, okay?"

Shouta doesn't respond. He kinda wants to curse at Tsukauchi for not letting him do his job, but he won't because that's not professional.

Tsukauchi sighs again, and he's quieter when he says, "Look, Aizawa, I just don't want you to die."

"Hey-"

"Listen, please."

Shouta purses his lips and scowls at the sidewalk, quietly fuming at the implication that he can't do his job. He *knows* what he's doing - he's *been* doing it for 12 fucking years now.

"I'm not insulting you." Bullshit, asshole. "Please, we can't just rush into this. We're already on the edge with this case. If Harbinger comes in and feeds us bad information, or he gets something we don't want him to have, or he just wants to mess with us, we're risking lives." Tsukauchi falls silent over the line. Shouta takes in a deep breath, then releases it. He fucking hates that Tsukauchi is right, but it is what it is.

“Yeah,” he mutters into the receiver. “Yeah, you’re right. I overreacted. Sorry.” He runs a hand through his hair, sweeping it up and out of his face. “I just really want to close this case.”

“I’m with you there, Eraser. Look, I’ve got to go, but don’t do anything overly dangerous. We don’t want to spook the perp into doing anything rash. If they catch wind of us finding anything incriminating, we’re gonna have a big problem on our hands. Goodbye.” Shouta’s phone beeps as the call ends. He shoves it in his pocket and starts walking down the sidewalk, heading to the café. He surreptitiously looks around, checking for anyone nearby, and upon finding no one, he heaves in a big breath.

“Shit!” he calls to the sky, scrunching his eyes closed. “Dammit! Fuck!”

-

Shouta steps into the café and the first thing he notices is Eri, sitting in one of the loveseats by the fireplace and looking at a picture book. The second thing he notices is Midoriya, sitting in the chair across from her, curled up and asleep.

The third thing he notices is the deep purple bruise marring Midoriya’s face.

The jingle of bells alerts Eri of his arrival, and she looks up at him with doe eyes before tapping Midoriya on the hand. He startles awake and *wow*, the kid’s a mess.

The right half of his hair is flattened against his face on one side from leaning against the back of the chair, and the left is sticking straight out. His eyes look bleary as hell, and he blinks one open slowly and looks at Eri.

“Bug?” he yawns. “What’s up?”

“Mr. Aizawa is here,” she whispers, voice so soft that from the doorway he almost can’t hear it.

“Oh!” Midoriya’s probably still half asleep, based on the way he hoists himself out of the chair and stumbles over to the counter. “Okay! Hi, Mr. Aizawa!”

“Hello, Midoriya.” He makes his way over to the chair the kid just vacated and sits down slowly, leaning back and closing his eyes. And

then he opens his eyes, because the room of the café is too quiet.

No matter what, there's always some sort of ambient sound that fills the room. Sometimes it's the coffee makers. Sometimes it's the radio. Sometimes it's a fire in the fireplace. Sometimes it's the turning of pages from the books that line the walls. Usually, though, it's Midoriya - humming, muttering, even just chattering from the kid. No matter what, there's always noise.

But there isn't today. And it probably has something to do with the black eye Midoriya's got.

He looks over to the counter, where Midoriya is still blinking sleep from his eyes, a tired frown on his face. Tired as he is, though, his hands don't falter from the process of making Shouta's coffee. With the way the afternoon light hits him, it almost erases the bruise from his face. Of course, it doesn't change the fact that it's still *there*, and the fact that Shouta still isn't quite over the phone call he just had, and the fact that someone would *hit* Midoriya, who has never done a single bad thing in his entire *life*, what the *fuck*-

"Mr. Aizawa, do you want a scone with your coffee?"

Shouta blinks and mulls over the question. Midoriya is looking at him expectantly, a fucking *bowl* of coffee in one hand and a scone in a napkin in the other.

Fuck this kid is tired.

"Sure, Midoriya. Sounds nice."

Midoriya beams, looking a bit more awake. He makes his way around the counter and hands over the goods, and as he takes a bite into the scone it's like he's bitten into a miracle. It's soft and warm, with just the right amount of heaviness and as he chews he notices that holy *fuck* there's *chocolate chips* in this thing, and he needs to stop being surprised that the kids can make stuff like this. Shit, if Shouta wasn't a greedy bastard, he'd start recommending this place to his coworkers.

Well. He might do that anyways, greedy bastard or not, because these kids probably need the money. It's not like the people he works with can't afford it.

His gaze shifts from the scone of miracles back to Midoriya, who's situated himself so that Eri is sitting on his lap, and he's holding her book while she leans against his chest. He's fixed his hair a bit, so that

now instead of *half* of a mess, it's all one big together mess.

For just a moment, Shouta marvels at how amazing Midoriya is. This little ball of anxiety, who he's known for a while now, has come out of his shell to help a little girl. That he's managed to help her so completely that she feels safe enough to relax around him. He's created a completely new world for her, all by himself. Shit, the kid restructured his entire life for her when she got here. Only an honest-to-shit hero would do what Midoriya is doing.

He looks at the soft expression on Midoriya's face and the way his hands are petting Eri's hair and it hits him - Midoriya would *immolate* himself for her. It's a sudden and terrifying realization, and he knows it's true the second the thought crosses his mind.

He studies the bruise on Midoriya's face.

"Kid," he grunts. Both he and Eri look up at the same time, with almost identical expressions of curiosity. Well, Eri doesn't quite look him in the eye, but her gaze falls at his nose, so he counts it as a win. He resists the urge to roll his eyes at them.

"Midoriya," he revises, and Eri goes back to looking at her book, seemingly content to sit in Midoriya's lap and ignore them.

"Yes?"

"Where'd you get the bruise?"

The children stiffen. Eri goes still, her eyes dropping and lips pursing as she leans back a bit more into Midoriya. The boy flushes and looks to the side. He pulls the book from Eri's limp hands and sets it on the side table, maneuvering his hands to wrap around her. His fingers fidget and he gets the look on his face like he's trying to think up a lie.

"Um-"

"The truth, please."

Midoriya flushes a bit more at the interruption, and looks down at Eri.

"I saw Kacchan yesterday. He- um, he saw me, too."

Shouta hums and tilts his head to the side. '*Kacchan*' has been an issue since forever, and he needs to step off Midoriya's shit before he gets waffle-stomped into some humility. "You can call him by his real

name, you know. I don't make a habit of hunting down brats like him, and I don't think I'd start now."

Midoriya shakes his head. "No," he sighs. "It's fine. He's trying to get into UA, and if he does I don't want it to color your opinion of him."

Shouta snorts and Midoriya shoots him a frown.

"Anyways," Midoriya stresses, "I'm taking self-defense classes, so I'm not going to worry about it. It's not like he knows where I live, so I don't have any reason to out him."

Shouta shakes his head. Midoriya, the little shit, hasn't and still won't tell him who Kacchan is. Oh, he's asked, because bullying is fucking awful, but *no, Kacchan wants to be a hero, and it's not too bad, Mr. Aizawa, I can deal with him*. And that's bullshit, because Midoriya's way of 'dealing' with things is avoidance until death does he part. He doesn't press, though. When he needs to know, he'll know. Eri's relaxed a bit, and the tension in Midoriya's shoulders has loosened.

Shit, he wants to share this place with his husband. And his kid. He's thought about it before, and Hitoshi would love it here. Later, though. Once he's not so stressed about the case.

"Alright, Midoriya," he says, sighing. "But whenever you need me, I'm here."

Midoriya smiles, soft and sunshine. "Thank you, Mr. Aizawa. I'll remember that."

"You'd better, kid."

Chapter End Notes

so! I hope you guys liked the chapter!

to everyone who comments: thank you so much! your words fill me with happiness and joy and all sorts of other good things!

to everyone who reads and doesn't comment: thank you so much for reading! every time my hit counter goes up, I grow more powerful and it makes me happy that people are enjoying my work!

the next chapter will mark the end of the recap.

so here's the important note: it seems that my return into a mildly

abusive environment has triggered a relapse in my depression! which is incredibly unfortunate for me, but worry not! I refuse to abandon this, even if it fucking kills me. I just wanted to tell you guys because in case an update is late or of sub-par quality, it is probably that. I will do my best to keep up my schedule and quality, though, so never fear! anyways, I love you guys and more coming up soon!

Chapter 5

Chapter Summary

The end of our little time adventure, and the beginning of the deterioration of our man Aizawa.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Due to me accidentally fucking up the timeline, I changed Chapter 2 a bit! Ngl, the change is kinda major, but don't worry about it! I just got a super good idea for angst in the next chapter lol

Chapter Notes

This chapter was brought to you by the songs Say My Name, from the Beetlejuice musical, and Sympathy-Tenderness from Jekyll & Hyde!

edited 4.8.20

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

August hits and the lead in Musutafu has gone *nowhere*. Tsukauchi is working his ass off, but there just aren't any more strings to pull - and if he didn't know any better, Shouta would say that the murders didn't really happen.

There just isn't a single fucking trace.

On the bright side, Hitoshi has taken to calling him 'Dad' and Hizashi 'Pop'. Fuck, his husband hasn't cried that much since their wedding. Not only that, but he walked in on Eri calling Midoriya 'Papa', so it seems that family has been the theme recently. It also seems that 'Kacchan' hasn't tried to beat the shit out of Midoriya again - to his knowledge, at least - so that's good.

It'd be even better if there was a fucking break in the case.

It's almost September when he gets the call, and he's just starting his patrol. His phone buzzes and he glances at the contact name for a second, then presses the green button.

"Aizawa." Immediately, Shouta is on edge. Tsukauchi's tone isn't... unhappy, per say, but it definitely isn't ideal.

“Detective.”

“We need to talk about Harbinger.”

Oh?

“What about him?”

“He’s been sending me texts.”

Shouta chokes. “Fucking *what?*”

“He’s been sending me texts. It’s been happening for the past two weeks. Mostly location pins and pictures of beat-up villains, along with the odd comment or two. I don’t respond to them, of course, but Tamakawa has been picking up the victims and we’ve been questioning them and... well, I’d like to revisit what I asked you a couple months ago.” Fuck, Tsukauchi just sounds exhausted. He’s been working his ass off for the case, and they’ve gotten nowhere.

Privately, at this point, Eraserhead wonders if they shouldn’t just move on. The perp hasn’t made any further moves, and the chance that they’ll strike again seems to be getting smaller and smaller.

“What are we revisiting?”

“I want you to initiate a meeting with Harbinger.”

Five minutes ago, Shouta would’ve been pleased. Now, Tsukauchi’s getting texts and he’s just wary. His detective friend continues.

“At this point, we need anything we can get. If you can’t get anything from him, I think we’ll have to put this case on the back burner. It’s been nine months.” He can’t help but be relieved. He’s been losing sleep over this case, and he’ll be happy to set it aside until he can focus more effort into it.

“There’s a new group of villains running around, calling themselves the *League of Villains*. If the villains are unionizing-” Shouta swallows a bark of laughter as a sudden image of the local gangs picketing in front of All Might’s agency pops up in his head, jarring him out of his concern for a moment, “-we need to know about it.

“Will do,” he mutters, hitting the end call button. This is a serious matter, he reminds himself. And serious matters require serious thought, not potshots at villains who aren’t even around to appreciate

how fucking idiotic they look in his head.

He sighs deeply, squats down, and closes his eyes as he rests his chin on his knees.

What the *fuck*.

Harbinger sending Tsukauchi texts is almost as surreal as All Might's irrational fear of short, elderly people. And now he's going to talk to the person who seems to have been doing his job for him, and he's supposed to *press him for information*? Shouta wants to meet the guy, sure, and set up a working professional relationship, but everything comes in exchanges. Shouta takes a bit of cash with him on every patrol for emergencies, yeah, but the amount usually involved with info brokering requires preparation, foresight. That type of shit.

Dammit. He'll just have to make do.

He opens one eye to squint at the phone still in his hand, and opens his messenger app.

Sloth

I'll be home late

Parayeet

OKAY!!!!!!!!!! I'll leave your dinner in the fridge just reheat it whenever you get back!!

Cat Son

Kk, be safe

He clicks his phone off and stuffs it in his pocket. Time to go, then.

-

He steps into the bar and recognizes quite a few faces. Most are low-level criminals, and local business owners, but he spots a low ranking hero and the head of a small crime syndicate talking over drinks, smiling and laughing quietly. Alas, as much as he'd like to bust some shit, this bar is a well-known neutral zone. He, like everyone else, knows the neutral zone motto by heart.

No lies, no snitches, no consequences, no issues, end of story.

He approaches the bartender, not sitting down just yet. The heavily scarred man looks up at him from where he's polishing a glass, and raises one pierced eyebrow.

"What can I getcha?" His voice is rough and Shouta can fucking *feel* the unimpressed disinterest radiating from the guy. He decides to get the point.

"I'm looking for Harbinger."

The guy snorts and rolls his eyes, looking away. If Shouta was expecting a reaction, that... wasn't really it. A bit more respect, maybe? A little fear, even some derision? He's not that well known, yeah, but he expected a bit more than whatever the hell this guy gave him.

"Yeah, you and half of Musutafu." Wow, okay, *fuck* this guy. "He'll be here when he gets here, or he won't come tonight, so take a seat 'cause it might be a while. Oh, and don't sit in the corner booth, 'cause I haveta clean shit up around here and I don't want to pick up the pieces of your broken heart when you get disassembled." Fucking *what*? Is this guy on something? The chances of Shouta getting 'disassembled' tonight are miniscule, he's not unused to getting into fights, but this guy just went damn near poetic with his warning.

Of course, Shouta *is* far more used to immediately aggressive situations, but he's completed his fair share of diplomatic assignments like this. This guy is, as Hitoshi would say, 'chaotic'.

"Whose booth is it?"

The man looks, if possible, even more unimpressed.

"It's his. Now, if you'd kindly fuck off or order a drink, I'm waiting on someone, just like you."

Fucking shit, this guy needs a serious attitude check. Shouta scowls behind his goggles, and pointedly makes his way to sit in the corner booth. It's not like there are any other open seats beside the bar, anyways. If waiting for Harbinger means sitting in his seat, then bartender guy will have to deal.

Bartender guy deals for about two hours. Shouta spends the time going back and forth with Tsukauchi over what to ask Harbinger, and only puts his phone away when a tall, slender figure pops in through the window on the right side of the bar. Shouta seems to be the only

one who notices right away, and he wonders if the regulars are just used to it or if this person is just really good at sneaking around. They stretch, and Shouta thinks that they take a good, long look at everyone in the bar, but he can't be sure because they're wearing backlit goggles. In fact, Shouta can't see any skin. It's a fashion choice if Shouta's ever seen one, but he muses that they could just have shittastically sensitive skin, or that it could be a quirk thing.

And then they approach the bar.

The way everyone gets quiet as they pass by, Shouta thinks that there's a good chance this might be Harbinger. There's a power in their steps, and the way they move is like raindrops through leaves. Easy, gliding, natural.

Look who's getting poetic now, Shouta.

They pull themselves up and... talk with bartender guy. He can't hear it over the general chatter of the other patrons, but it seems like bartender guy is far more relaxed. He sets down a drink in front of them and then leans in, and Shouta can't see if they kiss or not, but he understands that this is who bartender guy was waiting for. A minute passes, and then they turn around, glass in hand, and make their way over to the table he's sitting at.

They slide into the seat opposite him, and take a moment. *This is Harbinger*, he thinks, letting his quirk slip a bit. This is who he needs right now in order to get the Shie Hassaikai mess out of his head. Well, that or getting info on the new League of Villains group, but it's a step forward either way. His eyes are glowing red now, he knows, because his quirk is working on nullifying whatever Harbinger can do.

It's odd, though, because he can't quite feel what he's erasing. That only happens with people who have extremely subtle quirks, like Nedzu, and the quirkless, like Midoriya. It's not like it matters, however, because it's better to be safe than sorry. Anyways, it doesn't make a difference whether or not Harbinger has a quirk, because good information doesn't sprout up from a power. Good information comes from a person, and the difference between a person and their quirk is astronomical.

"Well." A soft, sultry tenor breaks him from his little reverie. "Won't you come into my parlor?" *Said the spider to the fly*. He knows this rhyme "Please, when you leave, think about tying up your hair." Harbinger sounds like he's smiling now, even under the surgical mask

and goggles. “It’s an awfully obvious tell.”

Shouta gets what bartender guy said about being disassembled now.

-

He doesn't think he's been this unsettled for a long while.

He's also more than a bit uncomfortable, and he should probably just go home and cuddle his husband. The quiet theory he'd formed a while ago, the one where he wholeheartedly believes that the entire underground community is being blackmailed into keeping mum over the Shie Hassaikai massacre, has just been proven, and now he knows who's doing the blackmailing.

And he can't do jack shit about it. He has to make do with what he now has on the League of Villains.

He looks at the paper in his hand, the one with too many notes on how he can improve his shit, and the one that lies on the table, blank-side up. He almost doesn't want to touch it, but he definitely needs to talk with Tsukauchi as soon as possible, and leaving entails getting all the information he can. He picks up the paper and turns it over, keeping it angled so any wandering eyes won't catch the words written in the oddly bubbly script.

And he's glad nobody else can see it, because the words don't really process.

That's Midoriya's café. The one he goes to often.

The one run by a fucking *child*. A child that he cares about, who's taking care of another child who's quickly worming her way into his heart.

The implication of these words hit him like a knife to the stomach, carefully and slowly gutting him.

This kind of power play, this kind of *threat*, this show of information that Shouta keeps close to his chest, ices his blood and he wants to throw up.

Bartender guy slides into where Harbinger was just sitting. Shouta quickly and forcefully crumples the paper in his fist, wishing the damage would change the kanji.

“You don’t look too hot, buddy.” No fucking *shit*, bartender guy. “Tell you what, I’ll give you one truth about him. Anything I know is up for grabs, but make your question good.”

Bullshit. Bartender guy works for Harbinger, and any question he asks will immediately be reported back.

He could ask about Harbinger’s real identity, about anything that could help with the investigation.

He can’t afford to not know.

Fuck.

“Does-” Shouta has to clear his throat to keep his voice from breaking. “Does he go after kids?”

Bartender guy looks like he pities him. Shouta will take it, if it means he gets the answer he needs.

“Nah, man. He’d die before he hurt a kid, purposeful or not. You don’t have to worry about shit like that.”

His eyes burn. He turns away and shoves both papers in his pocket, his stomach roiling and his mouth dry.

“Thanks,” he mutters, shoving himself out of the booth. He needs to get out, to clear his head, to get to Tsukauchi and figure out what the fuck he’s going to tell Midoriya.

Hey, yeah, sorry, but the nature of my work has put you and Eri in mortal danger, and there’s not a single thing I can do about it, not a single thing I can do to keep you both safe. Sorry about that, can I get a coffee now?

He goes out through the strip club, easily falling into the route that leads back to the station.

Bartender guy still sits in the booth, looking to the doorway from which Eraserhead fled.

“Told you so, thorn.”

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for all of the support, you guys! I just wanted to make sure that you know that I appreciate each and every one of you; those who comment, those who don't comment, and even those

who lose interest in the story. That all of you even clicked on this means the world to me. Writing this makes me happy, so the mere idea that other people are happy when they read this brightens my life. Thank you.

Chapter 6

Chapter Summary

Introductions: Hizashi, Hitoshi, Kacchan, and All Might. Three thousand words, and I gotta say that this chapter isn't half bad.

Chapter Notes

This chapter is... well, a bit. I'm adding a couple of tags, namely the "angst with a happy ending" tag, but other than that I think we're all good!

edited 4.8.20

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Tsukauchi tells him to calm down, and to wait.

He can go back to the café like he usually does, though, and in two days he'll pick up the information packet. He shouldn't tell Midoriya, because telling him could put him in danger.

Not telling him could put him in danger, too, but he doesn't say that.

In the meantime, he's decided to sit Hizashi and Hitoshi down and tell them what's happening. He needs support right now, and his family is the best support system he's got.

"Hizashi, Hitoshi, can we talk?"

Hitoshi looks up from his phone and hums, shifting over from where he's curled up on the couch to make room for him.

"What's up, Dad?"

Hizashi comes around the kitchen island, having just finished the dishes. He plops down on the couch on the other side of Hitoshi, a curious smile pulling his lips up.

"What's happenin', babe?"

Shouta sighs and closes his eyes, leaning his head back to rest on the couch.

"Work is stressing me out and I'd like a couple of second opinions."

Hitoshi snorts, and he feels the couch shift. Somebody's legs - Hitoshi, most likely - fall onto his lap. Hitoshi's more comfortable showing physical reassurance than using words, so it makes sense. It's grounding, and Shouta appreciates it.

"Well alright," Hizashi says, "what's bothering you?"

And so Shouta spills, telling it like a story. Hizashi oohs and ahs at all the right times, and falls quiet when appropriate. Hitoshi stays silent, but he pays attention.

"-and you know that café I won't let you go to?"

Hizashi jumps up immediately. "HEY! YEAH! I'm still kinda irked about that, because I wanna know who supplies your coffee!"

Hitoshi raises his eyebrows. "Oh? You been skimping out on me, Dad?"

Hizashi nods solemnly, and Shouta sighs.

"I have a café I go to when I can, because the kid who owns the shop makes the best fucking coffee I've ever had. Seeing as I am a greedy and jealous bastard, I don't tell people where it is. Hizashi's been nagging on me for the entire five years I've been going, begging to go with me, and I think that with the new threat, it's a good time. I can introduce you-"

Hitoshi groans as Hizashi cheers, and he rolls his eyes. Dorks.

"Don't whine, Hitoshi, you're not going. And Hizashi, tone it down. You can't shout in the café, and if you even try then I'm never taking you anywhere in public ever again."

His husband and son both protest, loudly, and Shouta scowls.

"Knock it off, you two. The little girl, Eri, was in a situation like Hitoshi's and we're *not* going to make her uncomfortable with sudden loud noises."

Hizashi looks down, sufficiently cowed, but Hitoshi raises his chin in a familiar show of stubbornness. He pulls his legs back and sits up, starting to scowl.

"First off, what do you mean 'situation like mine', and second off, what the hell? Why can't I go? I want good coffee too, you know."

“First off, it’s not my story to tell, and secondly, you can’t go because apparently I’ve got someone watching me. Hizashi can handle himself as Mic, but you’re underaged and you don’t even have a provisional licence. If someone attacks you, you’re shit outta luck. I don’t want you in danger, Hitoshi.” Aizawa reaches over and pokes his son’s arm, meeting his eyes. “You’re my son. I don’t want you getting hurt.”

Hitoshi narrows his eyes, but his ears are a bit red.

“How old is this guy?”

“He’s your age.”

“I want to meet him.”

“I literally just told you why I don’t want you there.”

“He sounds like he could use a friend, if he’s just sitting around in a café all day.”

“Hitoshi, you hate people your age.”

“This one doesn’t count. If you like him, I’ll like him.”

“I dislike that argument, but only because it’s true.”

Hitoshi smirks - probably because he’s almost won the argument. His expression turns serious, though, and he pokes Shouta’s arm back.

“I’d never put myself in needless danger, Dad. You know that. Just let me tag along. I probably need to socialize before I get into UA, and this guy sounds like he could use a friendly face.” Hitoshi leans back, a grin beginning to form on his face. “And I’ll be with two pro heroes. The only way I’d be safer is if Auntie Nemuri or Uncle Tensei tagged along, or something like that.”

Shouta scowls, but it’s half-hearted at best. “You’ve made a convincing argument, but I’m not letting you out of my sight.

Hitoshi nods, and Bastard, their cat, jumps on his lap. Hitoshi doesn’t look at the cat, but he starts petting him either way and Hizashi makes a squeaking sound.

“Anyways, as I was saying, there’s been a threat against him and his... kid. I want other people - people I *trust* - to know about the situation and try to look out for him. Now that Hitoshi is participating, I guess I have a better reason to take you guys when I go.” Hizashi whoops and

Shouta shoots him a glare. "You'll be *polite*, and you won't shout, and you'll be nice. His mom is in America, but she won't hesitate to come over here and kick all of our asses if we make him cry. And he cries easily."

Shouta huffs out a breath, rubbing at his eyes. He needs to sleep more.

"Okay. Here's how this'll go."

-

Contrary to popular belief, Bakugou Katsuki doesn't *hate* Deku. He just doesn't fucking understand him.

The little shit is constantly standing up for people who should be able to defend themselves. He's always going on about being a hero, even though he doesn't have a fucking quirk, even though he's functionally useless, and even though if he somehow made it into the world as a hero, he'd fucking *die* because the world isn't *fair* and then Katsuki would feel like a fucking *tool* because who else could tell Auntie that her precious baby died? And what the fuck would he do if Deku died? Accept it?

Fuck no.

Katsuki doesn't just let shit happen. He makes it happen, his way, and his way doesn't involve some shitty C-rank villain taking Deku out.

(What Katsuki doesn't realize is that he's never stopped seeing Izuku as a rival, even as 'useless' as he says Izuku is. He knows it, deep down; he just doesn't want to deal with the moral ramifications of knowing that how he's treated Izuku is the product of his own inability to properly convey his emotions.)

It doesn't fucking help that the shitnerd finished middle school early because Auntie wanted to go live with her shitty husband in the fucking *United States*, of all places. And now he never sees Deku, doesn't know what the fuck that little shit is up to, doesn't know if he's *still* trying to be a hero. Knowing him, he probably is, but Katsuki knows that he won't be able to get into a hero school without a quirk. It's a good fucking thing, too, because this year, Katsuki's going to get into UA and become number one.

(Katsuki actually *has* seen Izuku recently, he just doesn't count it because all he did was get angry and punch the shitnerd in the face. Seeing Deku would mean talking to him. And it's not like he could

stop being angry and ask him where the fuck he's been, what he's been doing.)

He doesn't need Deku getting in his way.

-

Eri loves Papa more than anything in the whole wide world.

He's so very good to her, and he's never ever yelled or been mean to her or any of the things that Father and Mr. Kurono used to do.

She doesn't think that Papa could ever touch someone in a cruel way. Not truly. It's just now how he is.

They're going back home from the store, because there's something wrong with one of the coffee makers and Papa needs a new part - and he can fix a coffee maker, which is amazing - and they're passing under a footbridge when she hears it.

There's a scary noise coming from the sewer cover, and she sees the second that Papa hears it too, because he pushes her behind him and it's not a second too soon because there's *something* bursting up from the sewers and it smells awful and then it says something that she can't hear because there's thunder in her ears and then it *has Papa* and she can't do *anything*-

She's frozen as she takes in, eyes wide, the sight of the monster surrounding Papa. He's clawing at it, and her feet are lead, and his eyes are panicked, and her legs won't work, and his face is red, and she can't move, and then it's over.

A super-strong wind comes and blasts the monster away, freeing her Papa and he *falls*. Her legs unstick and she sprints the short distance, falling to her knees beside him as tears finally come, spilling out onto her cheeks. Her hands hover over him, because she doesn't trust herself to touch him because what if she disappears? What if she touches him and her quirk activates and he disappears and leaves her all alone and then there's a shadow over her, and a big man she recognizes from the TV - All Might.

Papa's second favorite hero.

He'll help.

"Please," she sobs. "*Please.*"

All Might kneels down, and his smile does little to reassure her because it's too bright. It's not like Papa's smile, which is real and good and lets her know that everything is okay.

"Everything will be fine, little one! You know why?"

She doesn't know, and she can't until Papa wakes up and explains it to her, because he always explains everything to her and he can't- he has to- he-

"Because I am here!"

She wants Papa.

-

Time is an odd and awful thing. His time with Eri, just a few months shy of a year, has flown by. It feels like days, but just last night he was planning on how to help Eri with her quirk. Just last night, he was talking to Mr. Aizawa. Just last night, he was writing the analysis.

Just a few minutes ago...

Izuku wakes up to the sound of Eri sobbing and the muted light of a shadow. And then he remembers and he shoots up, turning away from her and throwing up because there's something *in his throat* and he can't *breathe* and everything feels *disgusting* and *wrong*. He shivers, blood like ice, and looks up, wiping his mouth on his sleeve.

He looks up at All Might, who is crouching above him and smiling like nothing is wrong when *everything is wrong*-

Had he been a year younger, Izuku would have jumped at the opportunity to talk with the man-

Eri takes his hand and holds it up to her face, as if reassuring herself that he's still here, still alive.

Eri.

As he is now, the only thing he feels is dread. He's got a pressing question, and he knows the answer All Might will give him.

He squeezes her hand.

"Ah, young man, it's good to-"

“All Might,” he interrupts, cutting the man off. “Can I be a hero like you even if I’m quirkless? Can I save people like you do?”

All Might’s smile falters for a second, and Izuku *sees it*.

“My boy,” he starts, and Izuku can feel what he’s about to say - it’s run through his head countless times, but it doesn’t make it hurt any less. “There are plenty of people who are heroes who don’t get the same kind of recognition I do. Doctors, police officers, even agency managers. For any of those jobs, I’d say go for it. But... to be a hero like me... without a quirk, you’d get yourself killed.” Izuku would like him to stop talking now, but he needs to hear his childhood hero say this.

“Dreams are good, but you need to be realistic.”

There’s blood on the lips of the man Izuku has always idolized, and it hurts a little bit to know that his childhood well and truly is a farce.

“Okay,” he murmurs, unable to look into All Might’s eyes. Whatever this emotion is, Izuku hates it. “Please take care of yourself, sir.” All Might chokes a bit and Izuku turns away to gather himself and Eri up. His hand snakes around her waist and he pulls her up into a hug that they both need. Her crying gets louder, and she shakes with great, heaving sobs. His heart breaks a bit, because he’s made her cry and he said he’d never do that.

“Papa-” a gasp, “please don’t-” another sob, “do that a-again!” She’s sobbing so hard that he’s worried she’ll hurt herself if he can’t get her calmed down. He rubs her back up and down, listening to All Might pointedly ignore them as he gathers the sludge into an empty soda bottle. A lick of fire scorches his stomach, and his lungs feel like they’re full of smoke. He’s going to be sick again.

“I won’t, bug,” he whispers into her hair. “Do I look like the kind of Papa who gets beaten by a villain?”

Her head shakes, and he hears a muffled, “No,” as she buries her face in the crook of his neck. He laughs a bit, and sweeps his arm under her, grabbing the bag with the coffee maker part they needed. He scoops her up and settles her onto his hip as he stands. He glances one last time at All Might before turning and heading home.

It doesn’t matter. He knows he’s not a conventional hero by any standards, but he’s doing just fine as he is. It’s okay, because he has Eri. He saved her, and she’s here now, and she’s not in the hands of

Kai because of *him*.

He starts towards home. He's got a coffee maker to fix, a report to write, a bug to reassure, and a day to unpack.

-

It turns out fucking Deku's been lording it over him.

That's the only way he can rationalize it. The little fuck decided to *save* Katsuki from some disgusting sewer-silly-putty motherfucker, as if he weren't perfectly fucking capable of saving himself. He knows that Deku got a burn, at least, when he *rescued* Katsuki, because he felt his hand connect with something solid.

Serves him right.

(Katsuki knows that if Deku didn't show up, he'd probably have died. Fucking useless heroes, making the shitnerd do their job for them. They even had the fucking gall to *scold* him, as if he hadn't done something they were fucking up at.)

He runs after the green shithead and yells out to him.

"HEY DEKU! WHERE THE *FUCK* HAVE YOU BEEN?"

Deku whips around, looking fucking *surprised* that Katsuki's found him. And then the nerd's face turns to irritation, and what the *fuck*?

"Kacchan, please watch your language."

The fucking *audacity*-

"Fucking *excuse* me? Who the *fuck* do you think you are, you fucking-"

"Bakugou Katsuki!" And damn if that doesn't shut him up - Deku's voice has never been *sharp* before, and he hasn't called him by his full name, like, *ever*, what the fuck is going on? "You *will* watch your language, and you *will* speak *politely* around children."

Children? Is Deku high? There aren't any fucking children-

And then he spots a fucking waif of a kiddo standing behind Deku, peeking out from behind his legs with red-rimmed eyes.

Wait just a fucking second.

Red-rimmed eyes like she'd been *crying*, did he make her cry? Yeah, he's fine with Deku's tears, because Deku's a punk-ass shithead, but he's not fine with making a little kid cry; he's a *bastard*, not a fucking *monster*. Little kids have never done a single thing to him, so he stays off their shit.

He must look about as stricken as he feels, because Deku's eyes soften with something that looks like *pity*, is that nerd *still* looking down on-

"Hi, Kacchan. It's nice to see you."

Liar.

"Where the he-heck have you been, Deku?" Katsuki hates having to censor himself for this fucking nerd, but he gets that kids don't need to hear most of the shit he says.

"I've been working, Kacchan. Mom moved to America, so I took over the shop."

"What about school!? You better not be planning on going to UA, because if you say you are I'll put your a-butt in the ground!"

Deku, the shit, has the fucking gall to look unimpressed. Katsuki fumes, because who the hell does this nerd think he is? Nobody gets to look at him like that, like he's anything *less* than they are-

"Kacchan, I'm not seeking higher education. I graduated middle school, and I'm happy in the shop. And I have Eri to look after now," one of the little girl's hands slips into Deku's, hiding her face, "so I don't need anything else. Thanks for saying hi, Kacchan. See you around."

And then he turns around and walks away. And what the fuck can Katsuki do? Call out to him? No, because that would sound desperate. Punch him? He can't do that in front of a kid.

There's. Nothing he can do.

Katsuki feels helpless for the second time in an evening, and he *hates* it.

He watches Deku walk away, and he feels left behind - again.

(The only reason he wants to be a hero is because Deku was so excited about his quirk when it first manifested. The way Deku looked at him

- like he was the best thing in the world - made him feel so good, made him feel like he could protect everyone and beat all the evil. Made him feel like he could be number one.)

“*Fuck*,” he whispers as angry, helpless tears form in his eyes. Ashamed, he rubs them away, but they don’t stop. And they *don’t stop*.

(“Kacchan,” Deku calls out. They’re kids still, and Deku is his *best* friend. They’re going to be heroes together.

“Yeah, Deku?” he calls back, grin spreading across his face at the idea of being a hero with his friend. His *best* friend.

“Let’s never fight, okay?”

Katsuki laughs. “Why would we ever fight? We can’t be partners if we fight, silly!”

Deku looks relieved, and he doesn’t really know why, but it makes him worried. “Okay, I have something to tell you, though. See, Mommy and I went to the doctor and-”

The grin slips off his face and Katsuki’s dreams crack, right down the middle.)

Chapter End Notes

The change in Ch. 2: I had a bit about All Might telling Izuku he couldn’t be a hero, but I needed that for here (obviously).

Please note that I plan on having romantic relationships in this story (these are preset, so who I pair isn’t up for debate), as well as a Bakugou redemption arc that addresses his shitty character and actions. I dislike him severely, but I believe that he can be redeemed - he is not going to end up with Izuku, though. I don’t want a redemption arc for Endeavor, because he’s just fucking awful and he doesn’t get he deserves in canon, so expect some bashing on him. I’m also not going to write a Mineta redemption arc, because he’s a little shit who’s had fucking years to learn how to respect other people. I can’t stand him - I’m not going to kill him, mind you - so he’s going to go.

Next chapter: Hitoshi meets Izuku and Eri!! I’m so excited holy heck!!!

Thanks for reading, guys! I’ll update before the 20th!

Chapter 7

Chapter Summary

Part 1 of Hitoshi and Co. in the café of sun (not the name of the café, just a sweet little epithet)

Also - on the topic of Midoriya's stutter this chapter: I believe that Izuku is anxious around new people (with All Might he was in shock, and Harbinger is a persona so please don't come after me for that), hence the stutter. I loosely based it off of the stutter I had for a bit, so if there's anything that isn't conducive to your experience, I apologize but most likely won't change it.

Chapter Notes

oh boy, this chapter was a doozy - and I've got a second part on the way, don't worry, there's more Hitoshi coming up

but uh, yeah, I had a lot to do these past couple'a weeks, hence the longer break between this and the last chapter, but it shouldn't continue. If you guys have anything you want to see, interaction-wise, between these kids, please just drop a line, because I would love to write what you guys want to see!

hope you guys like the chapter!

edited 4.8.20

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

A bell softly chimes when they step inside and Hizashi *gets* it. The café is cute, and of *course* his husband would want this all to himself. It's cozy - cluttered but not messy - and the chairs look like they could just eat him up.

It's the perfect place for Shouta and Hitoshi, and Hizashi is *pleased*.

"O-oh, hello," a voice calls from behind a doorway. It's a sweet and soft tenor, and he bets that this is Midoriya. "Just one second, Mr. Aizawa!"

Oh? What's this? Step pattern familiarity? He looks over at Shouta and raises his eyebrows. His husband rolls his eyes in response, and he grins. They're friends, then. Or rather, Shouta adopted a kid without

telling him (again).

He glances at Hitoshi, who's looking around the café. He looks comfortable enough, at least. The space is big enough for him to feel safe, then. He's glad. Hitoshi deserves a safe place outside of the house.

A boy comes walking out behind the counter, holding a coffee maker in his hands. He's small, much shorter than Hitoshi, but he's not stick thin. He's got wavy, unruly green hair and freckles all over. White t-shirt with text he can't quite read, black pants, and a bandage around his arm that crawls up into his sleeve. Clinging to his back is a little girl, with her white hair up in a perfectly twisted braid-bun - and no, he's *not* jealous that she can pull that off - paired with a cute little navy blue tunic and sunshine-yellow shorts. Scars wind their way all up her arms and what he can see of her legs, and he gets what Shouta meant about her being in a situation like Hitoshi's now.

Midoriya - because Hizashi has decided that this boy is Midoriya - sets the coffee maker on the counter, plugs it in, and presses a button. It makes a little ding and then, because he's a sweetheart, Midoriya does a little fist pump and whispers, "Yes!"

Shouta, because he's a fool who doesn't understand the sanctity of adorableness, clears his throat. Immediately, Midoriya's eyes snap to him, and oh, he's even cuter with that smile, oh dear, he's found another kid to adopt!

"Oh! Hi, Mr. Aizawa! And..." his brows furrow a bit in confusion as he seems to notice Hitoshi and him, and it takes a second, but then his face brightens right back up. "Mr. Aizawa, and-and then another, smaller Mr. Aizawa - I, um, don't know your na-names. Or, ra-rather, what to... ca-call you? But," and he looks back to Shouta, the dear, "this-this is your family, right? I didn't just gro-grossly mis-misjudge this?"

His husband smiles at the kid and wow, his heart is melting because they're! So cute! Ugh!

"Yeah," says Shouta. "Midoriya and Eri, meet my husband, Hizashi, and my son, Hitoshi."

It doesn't slip his notice how Hitoshi straightens a bit when Shouta calls him their son. His heart swells up and he wants to squeeze the life out of him, wrap him up in cotton candy and blankets, but he can't do that right now so he just beams.

This is the ideal.

It *also* doesn't escape his notice that Hitoshi is looking at this new boy and *blushing*. Even *better*. Hizashi is going to cry, this is just... so good. It's a good place, and he wants to give Midoriya the moon - he hasn't even talked to the kid and he's already halfway to custody.

But before that, he's gotta address something.

"How'd you know we were married?" he asks, genuinely curious. He could have just been a friend, but no, Midoriya went straight to marriage.

Midoriya brightens. "Oh, that's e-easy!"

Hizashi feels his eyebrows raise. Whomst?

He continues on, looking down at the counter and fidgeting with his hands. "It's the ch-chain on yo-your neck. It, ah, it mat-matches the o-one on Mr. Aizawa-num-number-one's neck, and he-he's got a ring on that, and the-the way you're all st-standing indi-dicates a fam-familial bond be-because fam-families tend to-to mo-move as a group and al-also be-because Mr. Aizawa-number-one wa-was mut-muttering the o-other day about brin-bringing his family o-over.

"Al-also, y-you," he gestures to Hitoshi, "loo-look like Mr. Aizawa-number-one, be-because of your eye-eyes and the wa-way you-you're stand-ding. A-and you," he gestures to Hizashi now, "the wa-way you're st-standing, it's-it's-it's like y-you are con-constan-tantly aro-around them. Like you're used to-to be-being in a gr-group. And the, um," and he looks over to Shouta as if he hasn't just blown Hizashi's mind, "I do-don't want to be dis-dis-disrespect-pectful, so I'm, ah, num-numbering y-you off, but I think that mi-might not be, um, pol-polite." He slams his mouth shut and looks down.

"Don't worry about it, kid." Shouta smirks and makes his way over to a plush maroon loveseat in front of an unlit fireplace. He and Hitoshi follow, taking seats of their own, and *woah*, he was right! The chair is so incredibly cushy and soft and wonderful.

"I'd like to die in this chair," he sighs. Hitoshi snorts, nodding his head, and he hears Midoriya giggle softly.

"Yeah, Pops. I feel that."

His husband nods, eyes closed, and Hizashi wishes he could take a

picture. This is such a good place.

“Midoriya,” his husband calls softly. “I’d like my usual, please, with a Choco-Cat for Hitoshi and a Strawberry Shortcake for Hizashi.”

Midoriya perks up and grins like sunshine, beaming so hard that his eyes scrunch shut. “Will do, Mr. Aizawa! Coming right up!”

Hizashi watches as the boy lifts his arm above his head, grasping Eri’s right hand as her left wraps around his wrist, and lifts her up and off his back, setting her down on the ground without jostling his injured arm. He squats down and smiles, patting her head, and whispers something Hizashi can’t hear. Eri shakes her head, and Midoriya nods before slipping behind the counter, focusing on making the coffee.

Eri makes her way over to them, pokes his husband very gently on the shoulder, and waits for him to look at her, the cutie pie.

-

The little girl, Eri, seems to want to address them as a group, which is mildly terrifying. Yeah, he knows that he convinced Dad to let him come under the guise of making friends, but he *really* doesn’t do well with new people.

Well. This guy’s cute as shit, yeah, and his little sister is freaking adorable, but nobody sticks around after learning about his quirk.

Dad wouldn’t hang around assholes, even for coffee. Gotta remember that.

They all look at her and she flushes, wringing her hands in her blue dress.

“Papa got hurt and now he’s sad,” she says, clearly enunciating her words. “Could you please talk to him and help him be happy again?”

Well that’s a lot to unpack. First, who the fuck is Papa? Because there’s no way that Midoriya, who is his age, is a father unless he’s vastly misjudged this entire situation. Second, he got hurt? Yeah, he saw a bandage, but the way she’s saying it makes it sound like the physical stuff isn’t the issue. Third, holy shit, apparently he’s making a friend today whether he likes it or not. He can befriend an anxious twink, right? Or rather, an anxious *twunk*...

Not the point. He shakes his head to clear it, like an etch-a-sketch, and opens his mouth, but Dad beats him to the questions.

“Eri, how’d Midoriya get hurt?”

Hitoshi throws a quick glance to the counter, but it seems that Midoriya has gone into the back room. Huh. He looks back to Eri, who seems to have gained more confidence.

“He was, um, we got attacked by a villain and Papa couldn’t get out, and All Might saved us but he said something to Papa that made him sad, and then the monster got away and attacked Kacchan - he’s really loud and he called Papa a mean name - but, um, the villain attacked Kacchan and then Papa pulled him out but Kacchan burned him, and then we went home.”

Well shit, Midoriya’s had an entire fucking *week*, hasn’t he? Threatened by an info broker, attacked by a villain, burned by whoever the shit this ‘Kacchan’ guy is. Hitoshi kinda feels bad for him.

“Eri,” Dad says, voice soft like it is whenever he has panic attacks, “do you think that Midoriya would like to make friends with Hitoshi? I could talk to him if you want, but I think he could use a friend.”

Hitoshi watches Eri’s brow furrow, way too invested in her answer, and almost lets a relieved sigh slip past his lips when she nods.

Yeah, he’s making a friend today.

Or maybe something more, croons the mutinous voice in the back of his head. *You know you want a boyfriend, you useless gay!*

Hitoshi very pointedly ignores the voice, and instead focuses on Midoriya who’s walking over to them with a tray in his hands and a smile on his face.

He’s cute.

Fuck.

“Mr. Aizawa-num-number-one, here y-you go-” and Midoriya hands Dad the biggest freaking mug he’s ever seen, “-and Mr. Aizawa-num-number-two, here y-you are-” and this cup comes with cake and Pop’s delighted exclamation of ‘it’s pink!’ and then Midoriya steps in front of him and, “-and he-here’s yours, the-the Choco-Ca-Cat! It’s n-new, so you’ll have to-to te-te-tell me how you li-like it!”

Hitoshi takes the offered cup and it’s an adorable little kitty-shaped cookie sitting on top of whipped cream, with what he assumes is

chocolate-flavored coffee underneath. He looks up to thank Midoriya, because this is adorable, and the *entire force of that sunshine smile is focused like a laser beam on him-*

“Hey Midoriya,” and Dad comes to the rescue, holy *shit*, “how’d you get hurt?”

Midoriya bites his lip and flushes, left hand reaching up to touch the bandages on his right arm, and that probably shouldn’t be as endearing as it is.

“I, um, well, you s-see, um, I was wa-walking with Eri to-to the store to get a pa-part for the co-co-coff-ffee ma-mach-chine and there was a sl-slu-sludge vill-villain and he atta-attacked Eri and m-me, but we-we were sa-saved by All Mi-Might, so we were going ho-home, but then the-there was an ex-ex-explo-plo-plosion and it was on-on our way ho-home and Ka-Kacchan was being atta-attacked by the vi-villain, so I, ah, couldn’t he-help it and I ru-rushed for-forward and pull-pulled him out, but he did-didn’t know it was m-me so he fi-fired off an ex-explo-explosion and it, well, it hit my-my arm. And then we we-went home. And that was-was yes-yesterday.”

This Kacchan guy sounds like a real piece of work. Fucking damn, poor Midoriya. Saves some asshole and gets burned for it. Sounds about right.

Hitoshi can see his Dad physically struggling to say something positive. “You met All Might? How was that? You’ve liked him since forever, right?”

Midoriya ruffles Eri’s hair and pulls over a chair from the chess table, and helps her climb onto his lap. “It was, um, fine. He was bi-big and very st-strong.”

“Did you get to say anything to him?” Dad pushes, and Pop’s been pretty quiet. Hitoshi glances at him, and he sees Pop shoveling cake into his mouth, watching Midoriya with wide, all-seeing eyes. Uh-oh, he knows that look. Midoriya just got a new dad.

And so did Eri, now that he’s thinking about it.

“Oh. I-I ask-asked him my qu-question. And he, um. He s-said no. That I, ah, co-couldn’t be a he-hero.” Midoriya looks miserable as he hugs Eri, resting his chin on her head as her hands pat his good arm softly.

Wow. He wouldn’t have pegged All Might as the type of guy to say

something like that. From the looks on Dad and Pop's faces - pissed and shocked, respectively - neither had they.

"I'm gonna beat him up," is what comes out of his mouth. No impulse control. *Fucking dumbass.*

Midoriya looks up at him, surprised, and squeaks, "Wh-what?"

Well, he's already dug his grave, he might as well lie in it. "I'll beat up All Might. That's a really shitty thing to say. No matter who you are, no matter what your quirk is, you deserve a chance. Shit, I'm applying to UA this year. I'll get in, too, no matter what people say about me or my quirk. You can be a hero just as much as I can. Just as much as Dad and Pops could." Midoriya's eyes shine with incredibly sudden tears, and Hitoshi scrambles to fux whatever he just said to upset this ball of sunshine, but all he gets out is an, "Um, I mean-" and then Midoriya is crying.

Nice going, Hitoshi.

But it seems as though all is not lost, because Midoriya sends him a weak smile over his tears. "Thank you," he sniffles. "That ma-makes me real-really hap-happy."

Eri twists around and tentatively pats Midoriya's hair, leaning back against him. "It's okay, Papa," she says, and Hitoshi's heart must be failing, because that's the cutest thing he's ever seen in his entire damn life.

"And hey, uh, instead of the smaller Mr. Aizawa thing, just call me Hitoshi."

Midoriya nods, still crying, and laughs a bit.

"The-then call m-me Izuku," he says through sniffing, wiping at his eyes. His smile gets a bit brighter.

Huh. This is going to work out.

Chapter End Notes

Do y'all want me to name the café? I know it's just this little nameless shop right now, but I think I might need a name soon. If you have any ideas, I'll seriously consider them, so go absolutely wild my dudes

Midoriya's shirt says Pajamas, because he's still recovering from being fucking attacked last chapter and deserves something comfortable to wear thanks kids

The next chapter will be up before November 1

Chapter 8

Chapter Summary

ShinDeku Part 2: Electric Boogaloo

Chapter Notes

I've been swamped with work recently?? I got behind and had to play catch-up, which wasn't fun, but I got it done!! and I think that's very cash money of me, ngl lol

I hope you like it!

edited 4.8.20

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

It's been a couple of hours, just sitting and talking (Eri's gone upstairs, and they all get refills, because *Izuku* does something magical with coffee), when Dad pushes him into the firing line.

"Hey, Hitoshi, you should tell Midoriya about your quirk." He turns to Izuku, who's looking over at him with a quizzical expression. "I think you'll appreciate it."

Well fuck you too, Dad.

"If you're com-comfortable with tell-telling me, I'd like to kn-know about your quirk," says Izuku, eyes bright with interest. His stuttering has gotten a lot better since they've been talking, which Hitoshi attributes to the stress of meeting new people. It was kinda the same with him when he first met Dad and Pops, the only difference being that he didn't talk - talking meant people got angry, and it was fucking awful, all the time.

He got lucky with them.

"My quirk. It's, uh, called *Brainwash*. If you reply to a question I ask you, then I can take over your body; at least, until something hits you hard enough or I let you go." He looks over the the bookshelf behind Izuku's chair and waits for the derision, the condemnation.

"Wow. That's..." *scary, evil, villainous, disgusting, violating*, "incredible! Like, that's super ama-amazing, Hitoshi! You're going to be such a g-

good he-hero with your quirk, that's so *coo-cool!*" He starts, and it's obviously not true, he's being made fun of, but Izuku's honestly *beaming* at him, eyes twinkling and everything.

Damn.

"I'm se-serious, Hitoshi! The things y-you could do! You could ta-talk down villains, you could re-really make a diff-difference in hos-hostage situations, you could work un-undercover, you could do so mu-much! That's an incredibly ver-versatile quirk, and you could do so mu-much good as a hero!"

He's. Perfect.

Does Izuku even exist? *How* does he exist? He has to thank Mrs. Midoriya for bringing him into the world. There's no way he's real.

Nobody but Dad and Pops have ever told him that he can be a hero. And now there's Izuku, who's objectively perfect, telling him that his dreams aren't only reachable, but commendable? He's talking like Hitoshi's already a pro. Izuku is an angel.

And Hitoshi's got a crush the size of Tokyo.

"Do you mi-mind if I ask you a few que-questions about your qu-quirk? I, um, I analyze quirks in my free time." Izuku flushes a bright red, and begins fidgeting with his hands. "I-if it's not to in-intru-trusive, that is."

Hitoshi nods, and he can feel a pleased flush making its way up his face. "Uh, sure. Whatever's fine, I guess." Nobody's ever really been invested in learning about his quirk before. Everyone just tries to avoid him once they know what he can do.

"O-okay! So if I answer a question you ask me, then you can control me, right?"

Hitoshi nods. "Yeah, that's right."

Izuku hums, tilting his head to the side a bit. His hair bounces as he moves, and it's super adorable. He looks like a puppy. Or a bunny.

"Okay, so is it automa-matic? Or do you choose whether or not the effects ta-take place?"

"I choose. If you answer a question, it's like there's a thread between

us. I can tug on it, or I can ignore it. It's easy to ignore, but I guess it's easy to pull on, too. Either way, it's response based."

Izuku's eyes brighten with interest and Hitoshi gets a rush of something that feels like pride. Having someone who's invested in something he's talking about (who isn't one of his dads or an aunt or something) without being afraid is... incredibly validating. It makes him feel valued.

"If it's re-response based, can you feel the thread in regular conversation, e-even if you don't ask a question? Because based on what you're de-describing, I think that there's a chance that your quirk is re-response based, but even more so than you might think." Izuku looks at him imploringly, and Hitoshi leans back a bit, running through the idea Izuku's just given him. Huh. He's never really tried that before.

It might work.

"Nah, I haven't tried feeling for threads without responses, but it's a really good idea. You know, you're pretty smart. And, uh, thanks." He rubs the back of his neck, lips quirking into a smile, and looks at Izuku, who looks kinda confused.

"For what?"

"Oh, just, uh, not being afraid of me. Not treating me like a villain. It's kind of a common reaction to my quirk, you know?"

Izuku frowns, worrying at his lip as his eyebrows furrow. "No, Hitoshi, I don't know. People shouldn't say you're a vi-villain just because of your quirk. It's not your quirk, it's what you d-do with it that counts."

Hitoshi brushes away the thread that drifts towards his mind and huffs a breath of laughter.

"Yeah, I guess you're right."

Izuku smiles and it's like an angel is looking right at him, without hatred or fear or anything else, and it's so damn nice that he wants to hug him.

Well, he wants to hug Izuku anyways, so no surprise there. He's just too cute.

"Hey Hitoshi?"

Hitoshi nods, raising his eyebrows a bit. "Yeah."

"Would you feel com-comfortable, um, and you don't have to if you don't wa-want to, but could you, um, try brainwashing me? I would like to know how it fee-feels so I can figure something out?"

What the fuck.

Angel or not, Izuku's poking a bear. He'll get brainwashed, then he'll feel gross and violated and he won't want Hitoshi in his café, then Hitoshi will feel like shit, and then...

He'll lose a person who doesn't seem to hate him. Those are in short supply, so he needs as many as he can get. He glances at Dad, who's showing Pops a video on his phone. Probably a cat video. Either way, Dad doesn't miss shit, so he catches Hitoshi's eye and very subtly shrugs.

Well, fuck. No help there.

He glances back to Izuku, who's sitting relaxed in his cushy chair, face open and shoulders back. He doesn't seem overly concerned, not like Hitoshi is.

Maybe he's just making a big deal out of it. Maybe it won't be as awful as he thinks it will be. He can't really pass up a chance to learn something about his quirk, not when he wants to get into UA. If Izuku thinks it will be fine, then it honestly might be.

"That's fine, I guess. I don't know how it feels, so it might be weird but I'll release you super quick. Are you absolutely sure?"

Izuku nods safely, smiling softly. "I'm sure, Hitoshi."

And so Hitoshi grabs the thread connecting them, wraps it around his fist, and pulls. Almost immediately, Izuku's eyes cloud over and his smile turns fixed. He keeps his relaxed posture, but instead of the friendliness before, it just looks like he's been drugged.

Hitoshi keeps the hold for about six seconds before letting go, watching the string fade as Izuku regains control of himself. Anxiety creeps up his stomach, growing stronger every second that Izuku doesn't say anything.

He opens his mouth and Hitoshi waits with bated breath, steeling himself for the inevitable, entirely preventable, completely

understandable rejection.

“Okay,” Izuku says slowly, and Hitoshi deflates. “That was we-weird, but I think I have an idea for ho-how you might be able to im-improve your quirk. Can you tell me what it was like to do that from your side.”

Holy shit. This proves it. Izuku’s an angel. There’s no other explanation.

-

“Midoriya,” Shouta says, mindful of Hizashi and Hitoshi waiting for him at the door. It’s late, and it’s time for them to leave, but he’s got something to say.

“Yes, Mr. Aizawa?”

“This,” and he holds out a slip of paper, “is my phone number. If you’re in trouble, like that stunt with the silly putty villain, give me a call. I’m a hero, it’s my job, so don’t say anything you’re thinking about saying.”

Midoriya closes his mouth, blushing a bit, and nods. “I hope I never have to use this, but if it’s a true emergency then I’ll make sure to call you.” He grins up at Shouta, and bows. “Thank you, Mr. Aizawa!”

Shouta looks away, shoving his arms through his coat. “No problem, kid. Tell Eri we said bye, and that it was nice to meet her.”

“Will do.”

And then they leave.

They get about a block before Hizashi breaks.

“*Shouta you devil*, how could you keep those angels all to yourself? Oh, to think that I’ve been missing out on those cinnamon rolls for *five years* now, I could just *die!*” He flails backwards, flopping onto Shouta, who’s walking behind him. Hitoshi, who almost got smushed between them, snorts.

“Pops, you’re literally the most dramatic person I’ve ever met. And I’ve met, like, a lot of dramatic people.”

Hizashi looks up from Shouta’s shoulder, eyes zeroed in on their son’s face. Shouta can’t lie, it’s pretty impressive that he’s able to keep

walking like that.

“I saw you, little kitty cat,” he croons, eyes narrowed. “Don’t think you can swerve past me like that. You *like* him. Like, *like* like him.”

Hitoshi goes beet red, scrunches his nose, and looks away. “I like him the normal amount. I told you guys I was going to make a friend, and I did. He’s cool. ‘S not my fault he looks like an angel.”

“That’s not how it works, kiddo,” he says, keeping his streak of not helping his son out of situations he gets himself into. He’s going strong so far, and he has no plans on quitting now.

“Wuv, twu wuv,” Hizashi sings, quoting that old-ass American movie, “will fowow you foweval!”

Hitoshi covers his ears and starts walking faster. “Sorry, not listening anymore.”

Shouta tugs on the hood of his jacket, keeping him from going too far, and wraps an arm around Hizashi’s waist, lifting him up and off the ground. Hizashi squawks and Hitoshi slows down, locking his hands behind his neck.

“We’re going home, gang, not running from loud and dramatic gay men. And then we’re gonna talk about what we noticed when we were in the café, because there must have been something.”

Hitoshi shrugs and Hizashi’s apparently decided that he’s a sack of potatoes, and has gone limp accordingly.

“Hizashi, I’m not carrying you all the way home.”

“Yes, you are,” he hears, his husband's voice muffled.

“No, I’m not.”

“Yes, you are,” Hizashi insists.

With a put-upon sigh, Shouta walks home - potato husband, cat son, and all.

-

Eri knows that her Papa gets anxious. He told her once that he has anxiety, and that it makes his words catch sometimes.

Eri thinks that he's wrong. She thinks that there are types of anxious. And that her Papa has three kinds of anxious.

The first type her Papa has is small. It makes his words soft and gentle. It's when he's calm and not over-thinking.

The second type is medium. His words catch and he over-thinks everything he's gonna say, and he gets embarrassed easily.

The third type of anxious is big. It doesn't let his words catch. It makes his words scary.

(She's not scared, though. Not of Papa. Never of Papa.)

The big anxious makes him scare other people. It's when he's so scared himself that he has to force it onto other people. It makes his eyes bright and it makes his words come out wrong. It happened when Papa asked All Might the question. It happens sometimes when he sees the trench-coat man on the TV. It happens when he mentions Father.

She sees it settle on him when he tucks her into bed. When he kisses her forehead before he leaves for the night. He hasn't told her yet, but she knows that she probably shouldn't talk about it. She knows that he won't leave her, because he promised that he wouldn't and he keeps his promises, but it doesn't mean that she won't worry about him. He wakes her up and he's got bruises sometimes. He moves like he's hurt.

She'll get better, though. She'll make her quirk (it's not a sickness, Papa told her so) nicer, and Papa will help her make it safe. And then she can help him, make his aches go away. He's her hero.

She'll be his.

Chapter End Notes

literally this past weekend was so awful?? ugh family is gross, especially when it's your bigoted grandma who looks at you like a piece of her dogs shit *shudders*

anyways this chapter was fun! I'm happy that you guys seem to like Hitoshi, bc he's a sweetie pie and a snarky lil gay :)

I'll post the next chapter on or before Nov. 14th

Chapter 9

Chapter Summary

The aftermath of the visit in Izuku's house

Chapter Notes

this is an hour and 18 minutes late and i'm so sorry oh my god

edited 4.8.20

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

The first thing he does after everyone leaves is clean up. Izuku doesn't expect any more guests today, because the only other people that come in are one-timers who say they'll be back (they don't come back, and either way they're few and far inbetween), and a couple that only ever comes on their anniversary.

As he cleans, he hums and thinks about the Aizawa family. They're all incredibly nice, and even though he was stuttering his way through every conversation, they didn't call him out on it. He's grateful. His stutter is... something that he's had issues with his entire life, and even though it's usually just the manifestation of his stress when he meets new people. Well, when he meets new people as Izuku, quirkless kid. It's difficult, and a little bit humiliating.

But Mr. Hizashi and Hitoshi - he blushes and shakes his head at using his first name - were very nice. Hitoshi's quirk is amazing, and he smiles at the thought of how good a hero he's going to be. And he was friendly, and kind, and interesting, and sweet to Eri and him. Izuku's never had that before.

He thinks he might have a friend now, and he likes it. He likes it a lot.

The second thing he does is go upstairs, settle himself into his office, and bring out his phone, plugging in his headphones. A couple of numbers later, and the gravelly voice of Dabi washes into his ears.

"Hey, flower, what's up?"

Izuku hums, falling easily into his Harbinger persona. "Darling. I've got something for you to do, if you're bored at the bar."

A pause. Then, “Shit’s dangerous?”

“Most likely.”

Izuku can *hear* Dabi’s grin over the phone. “Hell yeah, babe. Count me in, I need some excitement,” he laughs. “Not, of course, that I don’t like seeing you all the time, but shit was getting a little monotonous.”

Izuku rolls his eyes, smiling. “Of course. And we’ll still see each other,” he drawls, “just less often. After all, I *am* kind of a hot topic, and I’m still beholden to my promise.”

The line is quiet for a beat, and then Dabi’s voice comes through again, softer. “Yeah. We got that in common.” His voice gets stronger, regaining its amused bite. “As if you could stay away from me, you klepto. You like the info I feed you. So where is the wind taking me today?”

Izuku’s smile drops a fraction, curling into something more like a grimace. “The League of Villains. The thorn from the other night is a sharp one, and I’d like to keep him around. We both need more information, and he’s willing to owe me a favor. I’ll pay you, of course, more than you’re getting at the bar, and I’ll keep watching the kingdom. *Are you in?*”

“Yep. Gimme an address, a contact date, and what you want me to collect, and I’ll deal with everything else. Send it to me tonight, if you could.”

“Wonderful. Do be careful, briar.”

“See you on the flip-side, hotstuff.”

-

Dabi hangs up and sets the phone down on the table, looking at it warmly as he leans his cheek on a propped-up hand. Sweet little flower, darling midnight bluebell. He wonders what he’s done that makes it okay to know Harbinger like he does.

He knows next to nothing, of course, and he understands that, but next to nothing is a lot better than anyone else. Harbinger knows more about him than anyone else, because that’s how he functions, but there’s a mutual trust and respect that keeps him from worrying about it too much. He runs a hand through his hair and soot comes away with it, falling onto the table. He thinks about the thorn from the

other night, and how Harbinger broke his heart and the question “Does he go after kids?” and the panic in his voice, and he thinks that something is going to go wrong soon.

Oh well. He knows what he can and cannot do, and he knows that he can protect who he needs to protect if the sky falls down on him.

Gentle, gloved hands on his face, no disgust from the scars and a smiling, lilting voice that laughs and rages like he does. A promise to protect the kingdom of a fallen prince, and a bundle of flowers every other Saturday at the hospital.

There is very little that can harm him, when his fire burns as hot as it does. Dabi is the fire, Harbinger is the wind, and he’s got faith that everything will be fine. After all, it’s not really up to him.

-

The third thing he does is go upstairs. He’s almost done with the files Eraser asked for, he’s just gotta polish them up and make them pretty. They’re due tomorrow, after all. He slips into his office, passing by the living room and sees Eri watching Pokémon on his way, and softly closes the door.

The walls are a nice beige, the desk is innocuous, and the dresser is full of things that are probably really, *really* illegal. Of course, the probably-illegal things are all under the false-bottom drawers, but still. It’d be bad if somebody just stumbled upon the suppressants he’s perfected.

When he was still going to school, science was his favorite subject. He was good at it then, and he’s still good at it. It helps that he doesn’t have to limit himself to course material anymore and can research more things in his free time, but it helps more that he’s got a motivation, a reason for this.

Protect Eri. Keep her safe. Keep others from ending up or staying in a situation like hers.

It’s his hero complex, he knows, and he can’t say he minds. At least he can do something, useless as he is. At least he can help someone.

He sits at the desk, pulls on a pair of latex gloves, and pulls out the notebook he’s using for this. It’s about half-full of everything he knows about the League, and he wants more. He *needs* more. At the moment, he’s got the basic rundown of the people he knows about, their quirks,

and their strengths and weaknesses. What he needs is their reasoning. Their mission statement, their vision. He needs to know them inside and out, needs to know them so well that he can think like them, see their moves before they're made and have the correct counters in place.

He doesn't believe for a second that Shigaraki Tomura, original name Shimura Tenko, would stop at something like a threat. He's the type of person who needs to be broken out of his conditioned hatred.

And then there's Kurogiri. Awfully polite, with a sadistic streak they keep up longer than they should. They're the mother of the group, and it shows. If they were given the chance, something to do that would cater to their emotional needs without feeling degrading or objectifying, they'd come easily.

The worst of the heavy hitters is absolutely All for One, though. An embittered old man who doesn't know, can't even *fathom* how far past his prime he is. There's nothing Izuku would like more than to rip into him, lecturing him until the cows come home and the sun dies. He hates child abusers, and All for One is a no-good, manipulative, awful and irredeemable child abuser. He twists and twists and twists until something snaps, and then he welds the warped pieces together into an awful, painful shape. Izuku hates him.

The rest are all petty criminals, small time thugs, and low-ranking villains. He's got about half a page each for all of them, but most of the notebook is dedicated to All for One and Shigaraki. And, of course, it's all in the handwriting he uses for Harbinger - the bubbly characters that far more resemble Mom's hand, compared to his habitual chicken scratch.

He's got one more entry to write. The one for Eraserhead himself. It's a... gift. An apology, more like, for freaking him out so much the last time they met on the job. He's decided to write a full evaluation of Aizawa - from quirk strengths and weaknesses to tips on how to sleep better to a couple of book recommendations. It's easy, doesn't take more than half an hour, and he's got five full pages - front and back - including illustrations. He hums a bit, tilting his head to the side as he bites his lip, debating himself as to whether or not he wants to write a personalized note. Dabi had texted him about Eraser's question, and it pulled at his heart. He didn't want Mr. Aizawa to worry about him or Eri when they were perfectly safe.

Dearest Eraserhead, he writes. A grin flashes across his face as he

decides to embellish.

You silly goose! I'd never hurt a child! Sweetness and innocence are things we have so little of today, and I'd die before I harmed any of your kids.

His mind drifts to Eri, and the thought of even saying something mean to her makes him flinch. He can't even imagine raising his voice at her, let alone a hand. He feels sick thinking about it, so he puts his pen back onto the page.

Anyways, here's a little gift for you - and he draws a little arrow to the doodle of Eraserhead on the page to the left - and it's a little continuation of the bit I did for you in the bar; for free, of course. I feel a little bad about scaring you, so here's an olive branch:

The Shie Hassaikai killer stands free, but they won't kill again.

All information - all knowledge - is subjective, obviously, but I do know that. They won't kill anyone else, so you and the good detective shouldn't worry about it! Close the case, keep it quiet, it'll be fine. I promise. No need to worry, Mr. Lawman. However, if you do keep the case open, I can assure you that you won't find them. I'm planning on keeping my gag order in place, and I've taken care of any would-be snitches, so there's nothing for you there.

(Not that It wouldn't be fun to see you try, though!)

Anyways, I'm going to wrap this up now! I've got a person on the inside if you need any more information about the League, so feel free to ask! I look forward to seeing you again soon, Eraser.

Enjoy your coffee!

Love, Harbinger

He draws a little star next to his name and flops the notebook closed, setting his pen down.

All done for today.

He puts the notebook back in the false-bottom drawer for tomorrow and sighs. It's definitely not his best work, but it'll do. He has to be careful with his analysis styles in and out of his Harbinger persona, because it just wouldn't do to have him connected to a vigilante who knows about the Shie Hassaikai case.

He stands back up, pulling the gloves off and tossing them into the waste bin next to his desk, and leaves his office. He makes his way quietly down the hall, poking his head into the living room.

"Hey bug," he calls softly, smiling at the calm happiness he sees as her head whips around to look at him. "Can I talk to you for a second?"

"Yeah, Papa." She nods, reaching for the remote and pausing her anime. He pads over to the couch, plopping down next to her, and wraps an arm around her as she snuggles into his side. "What's happening?"

"I wanted to tell you that I came up with a few ideas about how to train your quirk, and that if you're comfortable with it, we could start soon." She sucks in a breath and goes very still, and the creeping feeling of panic, that he's made a mistake, starts to wrap around his chest.

And then she shifts, sitting back on her knees, wide eyes looking up at him, and whispers, "*Really?*"

He nods hesitantly, feeling a bit sheepish as a smile curls his lips. "Uh, yeah. I was up pretty late last night, so I decided to make a sort of training plan that we could follow. If you want to, that is. I know that you're still not confident about using your quirk - even though it's super cool, bug, you gotta believe me - but I think that if we combined it with a little bit of my physical training, it'd normalize it and make it easier for you-" Izuku can feel himself start to ramble, but he's helpless to stop it so he just keeps going, hopeful that she'll see how good and wonderful and amazing she is, "-which is what we want, you know? You shouldn't feel afraid of something that's a part of you, I don't want you to feel afraid of something that's a part of you, so we can take baby steps and stuff like that until you feel comfortable with using your quirk on me-"

And she hugs him.

She surges forward, wrapping her arms tight around him and shoving her face into the crook of his neck as she shakes. He can feel his shirt getting wet, just a bit, and he immediately tears up himself, his arms coming up to hold her closer to him.

"Hey, bug, what's this for?" he chokes out, voice thick, stroking her back as she snuffles. She tightens her grip on him, shaking her head.

"Thankyouthankyouthankyou," she whispers, repeating over and over.

Izuku blinks the wetness out of his eyes, laughing a bit.

“Today was a lot, yeah bug?” His hand keeps stroking her back, up and down as she cries.

She nods, sagging into him a bit.

“That’s okay,” he says softly. “Tomorrow will be better than today, and I’m not going anywhere. Promise.”

She nods again, and her arms loosen a touch. She slips down to sit in his lap, curling up in his arms. Izuku leans back against the couch, closing his eyes as he traces circles onto her shirt with his fingers.

He has a lot of work to do.

Chapter End Notes

i'm shaking guys there's a character i'm introducing next chapter and i didn't plan for her but she's coming anyways
guess who, gang. hint: she's fucking terrifying
also?? i have a scene i've been waiting for that's up for next chapter and i'm super psyched so have this filler while i make that nice and pretty

hey i made a discord if y'all are interested,,,,,, [here you go](#)

Chapter 10

Chapter Summary

Please welcome Tsukauchi Naomasa to the stage! As well as a guest appearance at the end, so look forward to that!

Chapter Notes

I'm gonna have to go back and look at who commented for the café names bc this was a mix of two of them and I am eternally grateful - to everyone who commented, not just the people who I chose. All the names were v good, and I promise that I considered all of them

edited 4.8.20

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

When Tsukauchi Naomasa got the text to meet Aizawa, he expected a regular café. The kind with customers and staff. He didn't expect the meeting to take place in the café that Harbinger had threatened, at two in the afternoon on a Monday.

"Midori Coffee Shop," he murmurs, looking at the writing on the door. "Huh."

He goes in, a bell tinkling softly at his entrance, and sees a young man at the counter. His hair is green, he's covered in freckles, and he's frowning at the phone in his hand.

At the bell, he looks up and catches Nao's eye for a second, confusion flashing across his face before giving way to a genuine, welcoming smile that immediately makes him feel a bit more at home.

"Hi! Are y-you waiting for someone or would you li-like to order?" A warbled *truth* slips into his mind, but he pays it no attention - easily used to ignoring it by now - and smiles at the boy.

"I am waiting for someone, but I think he'd be fine if I ordered now." He looks at the chalkboard display of drinks and pastries he can get, and settles for the third one down. "Can I get a Pumpkin Paw latte with a cheese danish?"

The kid - Midoriya, if he's remembering properly - brightens, if that's

even possible, and sets his hands on his hips, looking for all the world like Toshinori.

“Absolutely! Coming ri-right up,” he chirps, before swishing through the door behind the counter into what Nao assumes is the kitchen.

Not quite sure what to do with himself, he takes a seat at the counter and looks around. It’s cozy in here. There’s a table by the door set up with a chess board, and the walls are lined with books. There’s an old-style fireplace with some ugly-as-sin maroon winged chairs, and the floor’s covered in mismatched woven rugs. The wallpaper’s in good condition, the lighting is unusually good for a shop with only one window, and the counter’s got a few stools - one of which he’s occupying - as well as a closed yellow folder at the end of it.

Huh.

That’s probably not good.

The bell chimes, and he looks at the door to see Aizawa making his way up to the counter. There’s a call from the back room, and Nao snorts a bit as Aizawa sits down next to him.

“One minute, Mr. Aizawa and guest!”

“So,” he says, smirking, “you come here often?”

Aizawa makes a gagging noise and a disgusted face, and he can’t help but laugh.

“Don’t even. This café is one of the few good things in my life and I won’t have you ruining it with your shitty pickup lines.”

Naomasa mock salutes him as Midoriya - there’s a nametag he can see now, pinned to a black shirt that reads ‘Blanket’ in white text - comes bustling back in with a tray in his hands and a little girl clinging monkey-style to his back.

“O-okay, Pumpkin Paw latt-latte with the ch-cheese danish for you,” and he sets down a mug with a cat face drawn onto the cream in pumpkin spice powder in front of Nao, “and then for Mr. Aizawa, we’ve got the Inko Special.” And Midoriya sets down the biggest mug of coffee he’s ever seen in front of Aizawa, who clutches at the cup with greedy fingers, immediately taking a long drink.

“What’s the Inko Special, if I may ask?” He forces his eyes away from

the mug, turning to Midoriya, who smiles and flushes a bit.

“It’s the first drink my mo-mom came up with! She, um, decided that she wan-wanted to make a coffee that was a little bit of something different every time, so she-she made this. Mr. Aizawa was the first ta-taste tester.”

Truth nudges against his head. Nao looks at Aizawa, who raises his eyebrows over the cup and makes a rude noise, and decides to let it go.

The little girl on Midoriya’s back giggles softly, pressing one finger to his cheek and whispering something in his ear that makes his eyes widen.

“That’s right!” He whirls around to Aizawa, eyebrows creasing his face in concern. “Mr. Aizawa, there’s a-a... package for you?” Aizawa stiffens, paling as Midoriya points to the end of the counter at the folder. “It was there whe-when I woke up this mo-morning.” *Truth*. “Whoever pu-put it there didn’t take anything, and no-none of the locks were bro-broken. Nothing was miss-missing, I checked.” *Truth*. “It has yo-your name written on-on it. I decided to just le-leave it there, in case you wan-wanted to... I don’t kn-know, dust it for fin-fingerprints?” *Truth*.

Nao intervenes before Aizawa can say anything, because he can see the man about to do something he’ll probably regret.

“Thank you, Midoriya. That’s actually what we’re here for. I’m Detective Tsukauchi Naomasa, sorry for not introducing myself before. But if the person who put this here is who we think it is, they won’t have left any fingerprints behind, and I always keep a pair of gloves on me in case something like this happens.” He takes out the pair of latex gloves he keeps in his pocket and hands them to Aizawa.

“Here,” he says. “You look at the folder, and I’ll check around the shop.” He turns to Midoriya. “If that’s okay, of course.”

Midoriya, who looks a touch uncomfortable (and who can blame the kid?), nods and adjusts the little girl on his back so that she’s sitting on his hip. “Should we leave? Like, go up-upstaiars so we don’t get in the wa-way?”

Immediately Aizawa’s head shoots up. “No. You won’t get in the way.”

Midoriya gives a relieved smile and nods. “Okay,” he says. “If you

have any questions for me, I'm happy to answer." *Truth.*

-

Izuku sends Eri into the back, asking her to pick out a pastry for them to share as he watches Mr. Aizawa and the good Detective work. His eyes are wide and interested, he knows, because they won't find anything and he wants to see what they come up with.

"Maybe a warp quirk?" Tsukauchi asks, just low enough for Izuku to almost not hear. He's checking the ceiling for taps and bugs.

"Maybe," Mr. Aizawa answers from the chess table, where he's moved. He hasn't opened the file, he's just looking at it for now. "We know that he has enough connections to know someone with that rare of a quirk."

Well that's true, but they don't need to seem so put out about it. Just because he knows about Kurogiri doesn't mean he can ask favors of them (he recently found out that Kurogiri identifies as nonbinary masc and uses they/them pronouns, and unless he's specifically asked, Izuku will die before he misgenders someone).

Mr. Aizawa opens the folder, hesitates, then takes out the notebook and begins to read.

Detective Tsukauchi (and what a rush it is, that he's in Izuku's house? That he's in Izuku's space, and he's not here to make any arrests?) has finished looking for bugs, not finding anything, and decides to check the locks on the door. Eri comes back with a frosted strawberry-buttermilk biscuit that he breaks in half over a napkin, and he sits her up on the counter as they eat their respective pieces.

The Detective doesn't find anything worth agonizing over, so he sits down quietly across from Mr. Aizawa at the chess table. He waits while Mr. Aizawa is reading, sipping his coffee and fiddling with the black queen.

Izuku can see when Mr. Aizawa turns to his note, because he stiffens for a second, then relaxes and sighs.

"Midoriya," he calls, and Izuku hops over the counter to move by his side.

"Yeah?"

Mr. Aizawa looks at him, eyebags incredibly prominent, and reaches up to ruffle his hair.

“I don’t think this kind of thing is gonna happen again. You have my number, so if things go to shit you can call or text or whatever the situation calls for, but you shouldn’t need to worry.”

A wave of affection and appreciation for the man in front of him rushes through Izuku, and he smiles.

“I wasn’t wo-worried, Mr. Aizawa. I assu-assumed that this was som-something to do with your jo-job, like a scare tac-tactic or something. If things go bad, I’ll make sure to-to contact you.” Izuku nods solemnly, keeping his smile. He doesn’t want Mr. Aizawa to worry about him or Eri, because they’ll be fine. Izuku wouldn’t let anything happen to them.

“Yeah,” Mr. Aizawa grumbles. “Scare tactic. That’s a good phrase for it.”

Izuku nods, and turns to the detective. “Would you like more coffee?”

Tsukauchi hums and nods, handing over his mug. “Thanks, kid,” he says gratefully.

Izuku takes his cup and a little bubble of pride makes its way up his spine. He makes good coffee, and people want to drink it. It doesn’t matter that he’s functionally a child, or that he’s killed as many people as he has. He makes good coffee, he’s a renown info-broker, and he’s as good a Papa to Eri as he can possibly be.

He makes his way back to the coffee makers, setting them to their needed settings, and kisses Eri on the forehead, wiping her mouth gently with his thumb to get some crumbs off her face.

“Coffee, coffee, coffee-making Pa-pa,” she sings quietly, smiling sweetly. “I love my Papa and he makes good coff-ee.”

Izuku grins and lifts her up to sit on his hip, taking her hand and dancing with her as she sings.

“My coffee-making Papa is her he-ro, he-ro! He makes good coffee while sav-ing peo-ple! He helps Mr. Aizawa and Detec-tive Tsu-ki! My coffee, coffee, coffee-making Pa-pa!”

Izuku swings her around as she breaks into a fit of giggles, hugging

her tightly.

“Baby, baby, little baby E-ri,” he hums in retaliation, wrinkling his nose at her when she gasps and leans back, eyes wide. “I love my Eri and she’s a swee-eet ba-by. My little baby Eri is a sweet-heart, sweet-heart! She makes me smile when she hugs me, hugs me! My baby, baby, little baby E-ri!” He finishes his verse and tickles her tummy, reveling in her whoops of laughter.

“Papa! You sang with me!”

Izuku softens as he looks at Eri, still flushed with laughter. Her eyes are wide and awestruck and adoring, and all of that is directed right at him.

“Of course I did, bug. You sang to me, so I sang to you! I liked your song, by the way. It was very pretty. You’ve got a good voice.”

Eri beams at him and he beams right back, bubbles of laughter filling him up and making him feel like he could touch the stars. He loves her so much he could die from it.

(Not that he would. It would take him so much more than just love to kill him. It’d take an inordinate amount of knives, probably. And maybe rejection from his mother, just to be sure. And those things come few and far in between anything he’s ever experienced.)

-

Naomasa looks over at Midoriya and Eri, who have just finished dancing and singing to each other. Midoriya’s now getting his coffee ready, and Nao feels a strange sense of anticipation build up in him.

He blames it completely on the coffee. It’s just... so *good*. Regular instant coffee - the stuff that he has at home and at the precinct - isn’t as good as this stuff, and he’s going to have to come back here at every possible opportunity to make sure that it’s not just a one-off thing.

(Based on the way Aizawa’s treating his coffee, even while stressed and reading a mildly illegal notebook, it’s not a one-off thing, and this shop is going to turn into an addiction he’ll have to hide from Sansa.)

Aizawa’s back to focusing on the notebook, and honestly? That’s unfortunate because he just missed the cutest exchange Nao’s ever seen, and he feels blessed.

And so as he waits for his coffee, Nao looks at Aizawa. Really *looks* at him.

The man hasn't ever lied to him. Not even on little things. Most people lie to him at least twice a day, even knowing his quirk. They can't really help it, and he knows that it's just habit, that none of them are malicious about it, but it still irritates him. That's probably why he appreciates Aizawa's company so much.

More than that, though, is that here? In this hideaway coffee shop? Stressed and anxious as he is? Naomasa has never seen Aizawa this relaxed.

Oh, Nao's seen him unprofessional, because Aizawa's just Like That, but really relaxed? Nao's sure that if he was reading the notebook at the precinct, Aizawa'd have the tension in his shoulders that meant he was still paying attention to the outside world, but that's gone and he's eternally grateful to Midoriya for helping his friend out like this.

Midoriya, who's just arrived with his coffee and a summer-day smile.

"If th-there's anything I can he-help with, please let me kn-know," he says quietly, looking at Naomasa. "I want to help." *Truth.*

Nao smiles back at him, 'cause the kid is genuinely sweet, and accepts the coffee. He motions to an empty chair at the table. "I don't know if we need help, per say, but I could use the company while Aizawa takes another look at... well, whatever's in there."

Midoriya nods serenely, pulling out the chair and sitting down. Nao watches as he turns towards the bar and makes some sort of hand signal at Eri, who smiles and calls out an, "OK, Papa!" before running upstairs.

"What was that?" he asks, curious. It wasn't JSL, because he knows what JSL looks like, but it was certainly some sort of sign. Midoriya flushes a little and smiles.

"Eri and I made up a non-verbal language, for when she gets too anxious to talk. We've been using it around the shop and house to practice, and it's fun so it's easy. We make up signs as we go, and so far we-we're up to around fif-fifty."

All *truth*, and Nao is impressed. Like, really impressed.

"That's impressive," he murmurs, a little bit awestruck. "Like, really

impressive. Learning a language is hard, but making one up? That's... that requires something quite a few people don't have, so more power to you, kid."

Midoriya brightens, and his eyes look like they're watering a bit. "Thank you, Detective Tsu-Tsukauchi. That means a lo-lot to me."

Truth, his quirk sings, and he smiles at the kid.

"If you don't mind my asking, why does Eri call you Papa? You look kind of young to be a father."

Midoriya startles, his smile losing a bit of his luster, and Nao immediately feels like he's stepped on a landmine.

Fuck. Aizawa just said it was complicated, he didn't say it was traumatic.

"Oh. It's a bit of a st-story. Actually, my mo-mom filled me in on the details of-of it. Recently, she told me that she ha-had a sister she nev-never told me about, and that her sis-sister had a child and le-left the child with the fa-father. And well, um, Eri's fa-father was... a really, *really* bad man." *Truth*. "He died, and so she ca-came here to live with me. That was almost a ye-year ago, and she started ca-calling me Papa. I think it's because she was used to hav-having a dad around, and sin-since she called that ma-man 'Father', she calls me Papa." *Truth*, his quirk sighs, and Naomasa is almost angry that the man's dead already.

"I'm sorry for asking," he murmurs, looking at the cheery yellow cup in his hands. "That was insensitive of me."

Out of the corner of his eye, he sees Midoriya shake his head.

"Eri isn't in that sit-situation anymore," *truth*, "so there's not nee-need to be sorry."

And the second part of that statement is a lie, but Naomasa doesn't call him out or fault him for it. As a detective and a part of the police force, it's his job to save the people heroes can't get to, and Midoriya's done his job for him.

He's startled out of his thoughts by Aizawa, who slaps the notebook on the table, peeling off the gloves and rubbing his face.

"Midoriya, you're a good person, so stop feeling guilty. Tsukauchi, you're a good person too, so stop feeling guilty. Like Midoriya said,"

he says, glaring at Nao, “Eri’s not in that situation anymore. We shouldn’t be sorry, we should be taking action. Tsukauchi, if you wanna do something, go look into the measures being taken against child abuse and make them better.” Aizawa turns his gaze to Midoriya, letting his glare go and smiling slightly. “Midoriya, keep raising Eri like you are. You’re doing great, kiddo.” *Truth.*

Nao nods, taking a sip of his coffee, and Midoriya starts sniffling.

“Thanks, Mr. Aizawa.”

Aizawa nods, picking up the notebook and shoving it back into the folder.

“Tsukauchi, I think we should get this back to the precinct and let Eri and Midoriya take the rest of the day off.”

Truth. Nao knocks back the rest of the coffee in his mug and nods, standing.

“Thanks for the coffee, Midoriya,” he says sincerely, “and sorry for asking an insensitive question. I hope that I haven’t made too terrible of a first impression,” he admits sheepishly, rubbing the back of his neck.

Midoriya wipes at his eyes and smiles slightly, shaking his head. “S alright, Mr. Tsukauchi. You’re welcome to come back any time you like.” *Truth.*

And they shake hands, and then Nao and Aizawa are out the door and into the chilly October sun.

“Is there anything in that notebook that I need to know before we get back to the precinct?” he asks, looking at the buildings lining the small street.

“Harbinger left me a note saying that Midoriya and Eri are safe, but other than that everything is just as ordered.” *Truth.* Aizawa pauses and sighs deeply. “Tsukauchi, there’s some serious shit in there. It’s really going to help us out. And I’m worried.”

Nao looks at him. “What are you worried about?”

“I owe him a favor. I owe Harbinger, a reknown info-broker who texts your personal number and has something out for Endeavor and knows a shitton more than he should, a favor. You could see,” he grits out,

“how that might be an issue, right? You see why I’d be worried now?”

Yeah, Nao sees it.

“I think,” he says slowly, “that if you’re put in a compromising position, you have a lot of people who’d help you. Me included. If you’re asked to do something bad,” and he looks at Aizawa, who’s looking right back at him, and stops walking. “If you’re asked to do something bad, there are scores of people who are ready at a moment’s notice to bust you out.”

Aizawa searches his face, and Nao keeps his gaze steady.

Aizawa looks away and nods, starting back down the sidewalk. “Yeah, you’re right.” *Truth*. “Thanks, Tsukauchi.”

Nao smiles and falls into step behind him. “Any time, Aizawa. Always happy to help a friend.”

-

Midoriya Izuku, as Harbinger, walks down a midnight street with a purpose. He needs a replacement for Dabi, and he needs one soon because he can’t run the bar by himself. He knows who he’s looking for, because he’s not going to let just *anyone* run his bar, and he knows that she frequents this area.

He hums his and Eri’s song softly, making up new verses easily. One for Mr. Aizawa, then for the Detective, then for Hitoshi, then Dabi, then Dabi’s family.

The detective is nicer than Izuku thought he’d be. He has kinder eyes than he expected, and Izuku finds himself smiling under his mask. He likes the man. And what’s better is that everything he said was true. Mom *did* tell him she had a sister who left a child with an asshole, almost immediately after he asked her to.

Midoriya Inko is a supportive mother, and she had told him, very firmly, to be safe and that she loved him no matter what.

Izuku doesn’t feel bad. He had asked his mom not to ask questions, and she still supported him. He’s keeping all of them - him and Eri and Mom, and in a convoluted way Dad as well - safe. He’s keeping Mom and Dad out of the loop, and he’s helping Eri find a place in the world where she can be comfortable, and he’s doing it well. And he’s going to keep doing it well, because he has to.

After the detective and Mr. Aizawa left, he went upstairs and talked with Eri about how he wanted her quirk training to go. She listened closely, made a few adjustments of her own, and decided that they'd start working on small things, like how her quirk works, tomorrow.

Rocks, then plants, then animal products, then people, he thinks. Slowly, to build up confidence, and when she has it down then she'll have it made. And she'll feel comfortable in her own skin, and he can feel like he helped her.

He hums another verse, one about the world, and then he arrives and his person of interest is sitting on a swing, playing with a butterfly knife and smiling to herself.

"Hello," he chirps sweetly, sitting on the swing next to her and immediately starting the back-and-forth pump of his legs that'll get him up in the air.

She looks at him, interest shining in her eyes (he can't make out the color in the low light of the moon, how irritating), and smiles at him.

Well, it's more a bearing of her teeth, but he gets the idea.

"Oh, I know about you," she sings. Her voice is breathy and high, and Izuku can see a flush staining her cheeks.

"I know about you, too! I came out here to meet you, you see." He's steadily getting higher, enjoying the rush of wind that pushes against his hood with each swing forward.

Toga Himiko snaps her knife closed and turns more towards him, tilting her head to the side.

"Do you wanna be my friend?" she asks, and he can *hear* the danger in her voice. The threat that tells him to *answer right or she'll cut you and gut you and do nasty things to your corpse*.

He slams his feet on the ground, skidding to an immediate stop. "Miss Toga Himiko," he breathes. "*How dare you steal my question.*"

And Miss Toga Himiko, Bloodletter of Kamino, throws her head back and laughs, and Izuku knows that he has answered right.

This is the beginning of a very interesting friendship.

Chapter End Notes

Tik-Tok voice: Himiko, what are you doing in my fanfic

Anyways, hope you liked it!

Come say hi in the [discord!](#)

Chapter 11

Chapter Summary

Eri and Izuku fluff only

Chapter Notes

This one is a bit shorter bc the chapter I wanted was way too ambitious with how busy I've been lately, but the next chapter should be good too :)

edited 4.8.20

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“Hey, Eri, it’s time to wake up!”

Eri’s eyes pop open and from the warmth of her blankets, she blinks heavily at the door. It’s early, she’s tired, and then she *remembers* and throws off the blanket, feet padding quickly and throwing open her door and-

Papa’s standing just outside the doorway, hands on his hips and grin on his face.

“Hey, bug! You ready to do *science*?” And Papa looks so happy that she can’t help but grin with him, and when she hugs him, he picks her up. “I’m so excited! I get to help you with your quirk! We’ve got a plan and we’ve been over it and it’s all good!”

His excitement is infectious, but she can’t help the rising anxiety because *what if it doesn’t go right? What if her quirk is evil and Papa just doesn’t wanna tell her?*

“And guess what, bug?”

She wraps her arms around his neck and leans back, tilting her head to the side in question. “What?”

“Even if it doesn’t go as well as we hope, we’ll still learn something.” He beams at her and immediately all of her worries are burned up by Papa’s sunshine. “There’s no possible way we can mess this up!”

A wave of confidence crashes through her and she balls up her fists,

throwing them in the air. “Yes! We’ll do good!” She grins at him so hard that her eyes squint shut and she hears him laugh. “And then i can help you and you won’t hurt anymore!”

She realizes something *very* important and gasps, eyes going wide with the sheer goodness of it.

“Papa,” she whispers reverently.

“Eri,” he whispers back, grinning at her, and her heart swells up so big.

“Papa, I can be your *hero*.”

Papa’s eyes go wide with surprise, and then his face goes soft and gentle, in the way she knows means he’s thinking about how much he loves her. (She knows because usually when his face goes like that, he says something so wonderful that it makes her heart ache - and it’s usually that he loves her.)

“Oh, bug, you already *are* my hero. But I’ll absolutely help you! Plus Ultra!” He spins around and lifts her up like from the Lion King, and they’re both giggling by the time he sets her down.

“Let’s get breakfast! I made waffles today, one of mom’s recipes - I wonder why American’s use so much sugar in everything, and then I try the recipes and I understand. They’re just so... sweet? That’s not the right word, I don’t think, let’s see. I mean, the recipes absolutely are sweet, but I think they’re more rich than anything else. It fills me up more easily, and so I don’t have to eat as much but! I do have to watch how much of mom’s food I eat because I need to keep! Up! On! My! Diet!” Papa’s face is determined and pleased, and her hand is warm in his.

Breakfast is good. The waffles have strawberries and whipped cream and Papa cuts the up for her, keeping the “ratio perfect, bug, you have to keep the waffle-whipped-cream ratio perfect!”

Papa finishes up first, setting his plate by the sink and giving her a quick “I’ll be back, give me one second,” before disappearing into the hallway. Eri stuffs the last piece of perfect-ratio waffle in her cheeks like a chipmunk and takes her plate to the sink, having to stand on her tippy-toes to get it on top of Papa’s plate.

Papa rushes back into the room, notebook and pen in one hand and a small bag in the other, cheeks flushed with excitement.

“Alright! I’m ready! Where do you wanna do this?”

Eri hums softly, thinking. The kitchen is too small for her to be comfortable, she doesn’t want to go into Papa’s office in case she messes something up, Papa and her rooms are both kind of messy, but the living room is clear and so the living room it is.

“Living room, please,” she says, and Papa nods immediately, following her to the couch. He plops down beside her and opens up his notebook, showing her a page that she... can’t read.

Papa realizes this and looks embarrassed as he points out the underlined characters on the page. “I know you can’t read just yet - and I promise I’ll help you with that - but what this says is that we’re going to be figuring out your quirk today. Stuff like what it can and can’t do, how it works, what it works on, if there are times when it doesn’t work, and stuff like that.” She nods up at him, tasting all the words he’s given her. They’re good, and she smiles.

“Okay, Papa. Sounds good.” And it *does* sound good, because her Papa is working with her and he’ll make sure that she doesn’t do anything evil with her quirk (not evil, Eri, never evil) and make sure that everything works out. Even if she messes something up, he’ll be there to fix it.

Papa beams at her and his eyes scrunch shut and his freckles bunch up and it’s very nice, so she takes his hand in hers. He squeezes her hand, lets go, and pulls the bag in front of them.

“Alright,” says Papa, sliding down the couch to sit on the floor.

“These,” and he pulls out some items - a rock, an almost-cactus plant, a packet of tomato seeds, a ziplock bag of bacon - “are things I’ve picked out for us to try. Your quirk, from what I know, rewinds things. Right now, we’re going to see what your quirk works on. I’d like you to try and use your quirk on all of these things.”

Eri slips off the couch to sit across from Papa, looking hesitantly at the items in front of her. She doesn’t want to accidentally touch anything when her quirk is active because the last time that happened it was *fear-guilt-panic-pain* but she won’t think about that. She’s not there anymore, because she’s with Papa and he’s always going to protect her.

She chooses the rock first. Papa makes the hand-word for *love you* and she makes it back with a shaky grin. (Papa talked to her about a hand-word dictionary for them both, because sometimes she gets scared and

he wants to make sure that if something happens where they need to be quiet, they can still talk). Her quirk, her power, starts to wake up and her horn starts to tingle. The tingles start to fall down like raindrops, filling up her body like a cup. Her hand starts to glow and she - very hesitantly - touches the rock.

Nothing happens.

She looks up at Papa, who nods and smiles a bit, soft and kind and easy.

“You’re doing wonderfully, Eri. Why don’t you try the next thing?”

She nods and pulls her hand back, and it glows a little brighter. Her horn starts to tingle more, and the raindrops are faster now. She touches the tomato seeds next, and again, nothing happens. Her hand glows a little brighter, and her horn tingles a little more and the raindrops go even faster. The bacon next, and nothing happens, and her hand glows more and her horn tingles more and the raindrops are pouring now.

Then she touches the almost-cactus plant and it feels like the world *shivers*. Her hand glows even brighter, her horn tingles even more, the raindrops turn into a river, and the cactus plant starts shifting. It gets smaller and smaller, until she can't quite touch it anymore. She pulls her hand back, curious and worried, and in the flower pot sits a baby almost-cactus, very small and very cute.

It worked!

She drags her quirk back up into her horn, and as she does the glow wears down and the tingles stop and the raindrops let up.

She lets out a soft breath and smiles, because she *did it!* She made her quirk listen to her, and she did exactly what her Papa asked her to! She throws up a grin and Papa looks so... so *happy*.

“Bug,” he whispers, and his eyes are wide and his hands are still.
“That was *incredible*.”

Immediately her cheeks warm up and she looks down, a tiny bit embarrassed. It’s amazing, to her, to be able to control her quirk, but for him it must be something entirely different.

Papa doesn’t have a quirk.

(Father would've thought he was perfect.)

She knows that Kacchan has been mean to Papa - is *still* mean to Papa - because he doesn't have a quirk. Papa gets sad because of it sometimes, and she's caught him flinching when something makes a loud popping noise - the same thing Eri does when she finds something that makes her remember Father. She doesn't like it.

She looks back up and Papa's eyes are still shining, still wide, still soft.

He's *proud* of her.

She'll make sure he stays proud of her.

"Papa, what next?"

Chapter End Notes

Eri: *has basic control of her quirk*

Izuku: beautiful, perfect, breathtaking, incredible, amazing, astounding

Come say hi in the [discord!](#)

Chapter 12

Chapter Summary

Mitochondria Izuku making, keeping, and in general having friends. And also one (1) enemy, but he doesn't count.

Chapter Notes

It's fucking Thursday, babey! I AM on a roll and I AM going to go through two more bags of cough drops before this is done.

Tw for the b-word and then a little blurb about slurs in the end note

edited 4.8.20

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

The shop bell rings and Izuku turns to the door.

“Hitoshi! Mr. Aizawa and Mr. Aizawa! It's so ni-nice to see you again!”

His excitement is genuine - Mr. Aizawa and Hitoshi and Mr. Aizawa are all wonderful people and they don't treat him badly. Hitoshi especially - Izuku can't remember having a friend since Kacchan, and Kacchan hates him.

He hopes he doesn't screw this friendship up.

“Hey, Izuku,” intones Hitoshi, and his voice is rough and sleepy. “You look way too happy for how early it is.”

Izuku looks at Hitoshi, really *looks*, and he has to hold back a giggle at how out of it he seems.

“Hitoshi, it's two in the af-afternoon.”

Mr. Aizawa-number-two perks up, clapping his hands together. “That's *exactly* what I told him! But *no*, Shouta and Hitoshi both said ‘Hizashi, any time we're awake is too early’.” Mr. Aizawa-number-two - he's Yamada Hizashi, Present Mic, holy *shit* how did Izuku not notice? Mr. Aizawa never said anything about that! - sighs heavily. “Oh well,” he laments. “I have married a morning-hater.”

Hitoshi rolls his eyes, and Mr. Aizawa makes his way to his seat.

“What would you gu-guys like? I mean, I kn-know what Mr. Aizawa wants, but is there anything else I can ma-make?”

Hitoshi and Mr. Aizawa both perk up at the implication of caffeine (like they haven’t already had coffee today, he knows Mr. Aizawa) and Hitoshi comes over to lean on the counter, looking up at the menu board.

“You gave me the Choco-Cat last time,” he drawls, running a hand through his already-messy hair, “so I think I’m going to have to go with the Cinnamon Calico.”

Izuku beams. “That’s one of my favorites! I make the whipped cream myself!”

The Cinnamon Calico is the second drink he came up with by himself, and it’s a cacao and cinnamon macchiato with cinnamon whipped cream - handmade cinnamon whipped cream that he’s very proud of. Hitoshi grins at him and ducks his head a bit - and *wow that’s kinda cute* - before looking back up with soft eyes that Izuku very much isn’t allowing himself to notice, or else he’ll burst into a blush.

“It sounds really good, so I’m sure that if you make it, it’ll taste wonderful.”

And if that doesn’t set Izuku’s cheeks on fire, then nothing will because Holy Shit, Hitoshi is complimenting him! On something that’s completely his own! And there’s no trace of mockery or malice in his voice!

The beam that pulls his lips up is involuntary and wonderful, and Hitoshi sends a warm, shy smile back at him.

“Thank you,” he says, voice thick with *something* as he presses his hands together.

Mr. Yamada cozies up next to Hitoshi, pulling himself up onto one of the barstools and resting his chin on one palm.

“Midoriya, you’re awesome! All these drinks when it’s just you and Eri here, I’d never be able to remember everything,” Mr. Yamada crows as he looks at the menu, eyes sparkling with excitement. Izuku flushes a bit brighter at the compliment, because that’s *Present Mic*, one of his childhood icons. “Can I have the Peppurrmint Cream? Oh, and it comes with a muffin! That’s so cool!”

Izuku nods. “Coming right up, please make yourselves comfortable!”

He pops into the back room, flicking the switches for the espresso machines, and washes his hands before taking a muffin off the baking rack and setting it gently into the warmer. He hums Eri’s song - she’s upstairs, working on a coloring book and watching cartoons - and pulls three mugs out of the cupboard. The ridiculously big mug for Mr. Aizawa, a kitty face mug for Hitoshi, and a dark blue mug for Mr. Yamada. He keeps an ear out for anything going on in the shop proper, while his hands stay busy pulling out the things he’ll need from the fridge.

The espresso machine beeps and Izuku shuffles around the mugs, making all three drinks at once - it requires a certain level of attention, and he likes the challenge - and sets them up nicely on plates. He pulls the muffin from the warmer and rests it gently on the plate, then pulls out one of his trays. He arranges everything just right, taking a second to grin at his work (organizing things is one of his guilty pleasures) before picking everything up and swinging back into the main area of the café.

“Dad,” he hears Hitoshi say, “that doesn’t help. Like, that *really* doesn’t help.”

Izuku sets the tray gently down on the counter, where Mr. Aizawa and Co. have gathered around a notebook that’s full of... polynomial functions?

At the sound of the tray touching the counter, Mr. Aizawa looks up with relief clear in his eyes.

“Oh, thank fuck,” he mutters, grabbing at his mug and taking a long drink. He leans his head back and closes his eyes, sighing. “Midoriya,” he states, tone deadly serious.

“Mr. Aizawa,” he says back in an equally grave tone.

“Are you good at math?”

“Mr. Aizawa,” he starts earnestly - because honestly? Poor Mr. Aizawa - “you don’t use that calculator function in polynomials. I don’t even know how you got this curve, given the equation is quartic, not cubic. It has to go back up.”

Hitoshi, Mr. Yamada, and Mr. Aizawa look at him like he’s hung the

stars and presented them the moon.

“Oh,” he says softly, blushing furiously. “I, um, I do in-independent study. I guess I’m not bad?”

They don’t stop staring at him.

“W-would you like... help?”

-

It’s decided.

Hitoshi’s full fucking blast in love with Izuku, and nobody’s ever going to convince him of anything else.

Two hours and three cups of coffee have Hitoshi buzzed and full of so much information he could kill All Might and get away with it. He *understands* math now, to a degree he hadn’t thought possible.

The numbers.

They speak to him.

“Hey Izuku. I want your opinion on something.”

Izuku looks up from the notebook, the eraser from one of the multiple mechanical pencils resting on his bottom lip. “Yes?” he asks, smiling softly.

“I’m not going to take the UA entrance exam.”

It takes a second, but Izuku’s eyebrows draw together as his face shifts from curiosity to confusion and then worry.

“Hitoshi, did something happen? Did someone say something mean to you about your quirk? I’ll beat them up if they did, I absolutely will, just say the word! Don’t let other people’s words keep you from following your dreams!”

Hitoshi holds up a hand to save himself from drowning in Izuku’s supportive concern, and Izuku halts.

“Dad and Pops offered, so I’m going to do the recommendation exam instead.” He sighs as understanding flickers across Izuku’s face, taking a sip of his shittastically good coffee. “The regular entrance exam is far too focused on flashy, powerful emitter quirks for me to get into

the hero course that way. I decided to, ah, utilize my resources and make sure I can get to where I need to be that way.”

Hitoshi chances a look at Izuku, who’s nodding understandingly.

“Do you, ah, think I did the right thing?”

The question seems to catch Izuku off guard. Fluffy green hair shifts from side to side as Izuku hums, drawing together an answer. Hitoshi holds his breath a little, because he really wants Izuku’s honest opinion, but he also really wants Izuku’s honest opinion to be that he did an okay, not morally-repulsive thing.

“I think,” Izuku says slowly, and Hitoshi quietly sucks in a breath, “that you did right.” *Thank fuck.* “The UA entrance exam is and always has been unfair-fairly geared towards flashy, powerful, ‘heroic’ quirks. Your quirk isn’t flashy, and from what you say, people don’t think it’s heroic. It’s powerful, but I’m pretty sure that the exam contains robots and robots don’t have brains to wash.

“Hitoshi,” and he looks at Izuku, whose gaze is open and earnest and honest and *kind*, “don’t worry about it being the wrong thing to do. Taking steps to achieve your dreams is never wrong.”

Holy *shit* he wants to cry now. He didn’t really get how heavy this was until about three minutes ago, and having this type of reassurance is really helping him out. Of course Dad and Pops said the same thing, but hearing it from Izuku is just... different. Good different.

“Fuckin mint,” he whispers. “Thanks, Izuku. I needed that.”

Izuku grins warm and sunshine and it doesn’t hurt Hitoshi’s eyes when he looks.

“Any time, Hiichan!”

Fucking what.

Izuku catches his slip as Hitoshi’s cheeks go subatomic and he can hear Pops cackling in the background as Izuku scrambles to apologize.

Today is fucking awesome.

-

Himiko has a new friend now.

He comes to visit almost every night, in his all-black and pretty-blue and soft-voice. When she first saw him, she was playing with her knife and he had *snuck up on her*, the pretty bird. He called a soft-pretty-song and he wanted to be *friends*, something she hadn't had in *so long*. Not since the pretty boy in her class, the one who cried-and-screamed-and-wailed when she just wanted to be close to him.

But *this*? This *right here*? It's very good.

She's at the bar right now, because Birdy doesn't have anyone here to help him out, and Birdy's sitting on the bar next to some low-life-degenerate who *really* doesn't need to be that close to him (Himiko heard the man call himself 'Giran', and she has a name to put on a body now). They're talking about something or other and she's only really half-listening because she wants to play with the alcohol.

"What's up with the crazy-lookin' bitch at the bar? Ya boy toy didn't work out?"

Her head pops up and *oh, that just won't do*, but she doesn't have to worry about a thing, because Birdy is already on it.

In a showy display of power-protection-friendship-anger, Birdy's hand flashes out, grabbing the man's hair and slamming his face down against the counter, *hard*. A shiver runs through her and the man yelps and there's a *crack* like the breaking of a nose.

"What the fuck!" The man yelps, glaring at Birdy and Himiko doesn't say a single word, doesn't make a single sound as she watches the exchange. She stays behind the bar, like Birdy asked her to, like how Birdy showed her.

Birdy's voice isn't so soft-nice-warm-fun when he talks to the man. "I don't like the way you addressed Miss Toga. Or, for that matter, Dabi, but I think we need to address the sexism before we address the poorly-hidden homophobia." The man clutches at his nose and Birdy takes his hand back, wiping it on his pants like he touched something particularly nasty. It has Himiko grinning, and she has to stifle a giggle as she reaches for the rum for the mixer she's going to make herself. (A higher BAC helps her think straight, oddly enough.)

"Fuck you, Harbinger! You think just 'cause you're hot shit that I'm going-"

And Birdy doesn't even have to make him quiet now, because Himiko is going to do her job as a friend and the knife she's holding at the

man's throat is going to help her.

"You shouldn't talk to Birdy like that, mister. I don't have a lot of friends, so I gotta protect the ones I do, right?" She giggles, pushing the knife further into the now-quiet man's neck. Her gaze zeroes in on the rivulet of blood that traces the edge of her blade and she flexes the fingers of her other hand around the neck of the rum bottle in anticipation.

"Fuck you, you fucking psychopath!" The man scrambles backwards and storms to the door, looking over his shoulder and snarling. "I'll see you around, asshole."

Harbinger laughs, a pretty bell-chime-clear-ringing, and shakes his head. "Don't ever speak to me again, Giran."

Giran flushes, a really not-cute thing that goes too high on his cheeks, and slams the door on his way out.

Himiko pulls her knife-and-arm back from where she's still got it raised and twists it around, watching the blood shine in the dim bar light. She pulls out a small glass vial - she keeps them on her at all times, they come in handy - and manages to fill it about halfway before capping it and slipping it back into her skirt.

"I think that went well, don't you?"

She snickers, shaking her head. "I don't know, Birdy, I don't think he was very happy with you. He was very un-cute."

Birdy nods sagely, pressing his hands into his lap and crossing his ankles so that he looks like the prim-and-proper-princess he is. "No," he simpers, making her giggle, "he was *very* un-cute. Simply dreadful manners, darling."

Himiko nods back, just as proper, because she *likes* this game. "Terrible."

"Abhorrent."

"Truly loathsome."

"Completely awful."

"Yeah, that wasn't very cash-money of him," a new voice cuts in, all deep-and-smoky-and-sooty. Birdy's head whips to the side and he

gasps in excitement, throwing himself off the counter and into the waiting arms of a tall man with dark hair and pretty-purple scars lining his jaw and eyes.

“Hot stuff! You’re here!” Birdy *wraps* himself around the new man, legs coming up ‘round his waist and arms near-choking him. Birdy leans back and the man scrambles to get his hands around his back, making sure Birdy doesn’t fall. “How’d it go?”

The man grins and moves them to the bar, setting Birdy back down on the counter and pulling up a barstool for himself. “Went well. I’ll be leaving in a few days, I’m moving in with them now that I don’t have a stable income. I’ll be texting you of course, but I think it’ll be a while before we can meet up again, my love.” The man swoons dramatically and Birdy snickers, and Himiko is watching them like a hawk. The second this man says something mean to her Birdy? He’ll lose the stitches.

And then the man turns to her, holds out a hand, and says, “Hi. I’m Dabi. This used to be my job, but flower here kicked my ass out.” He’s grinning, and it’s infectious. Himiko grins back and grabs his hand, yanking him forward.

“Hi,” she says. “I’m Toga, Toga Himiko! Birdy found me on the swings and now we’re friends. I stole your job *and* your bitch!”

Dabi throws his head back and laughs, and it’s not Birdy’s, but it’s still warm-fun-loud-good. “You’re like a stray cat!” He turns to Birdy. “You really found this chick on a swing set? Damn, at least I was a proper street urchin.”

Himiko can hear Birdy’s grin under his mask as he snickers. “I like to think myself an equal-opportunity type of person.”

Dabi nods and rests his cheek on his hand. “So what’s with the school-girl getup? Is it a fetish thing or are you, like, actually a high-school student? Want me to call CPS?”

Himiko waves her hand, grinning. “I’m not a high-school student *anymore*, but I was until very recently! I got expelled because my crush didn’t understand that my favorite way to be with a person is to actually *be* them.”

Dabi’s quiet for a second.

“Hooooooly fuck. Tell me more.”

Chapter End Notes

On the topic of slurs: I hate the word “bitch” so much. On the scale I use, it falls below the n-word (obviously) and faggot, but it’s vile and it makes me wildly uncomfortable. THAT SAID, it’s being reclaimed. It’s being reclaimed by women I love and respect and know, and even though I would never use it, I think that Toga would. Bakugou won’t use it, because gender has no standing on quirks and power, but it might be used by other characters as both an insult and a casual term. Izuku will always react to sexism and homophobia with extreme prejudice, because he’s done having people being shitty about things nobody can change. Thanks for coming to my TED Talk.

Next chapter will come sometime before Jan 2nd!

Come say hi in the [discord!](#)

Chapter 13

Chapter Summary

This just in: All Might found dead in Miami! And if you will all welcome the wonderful, incredible, illustrious Ms. Todoroki Rei!

Chapter Notes

Can I get uhhhhhh fuckin uhhhhhh happy holidays?

This chapter was supposed to be way different lol I derailed it so I could make myself cry BUT don't worry bc I'll put the stuff that was supposed to be in this chapter in the next one instead. :)

edited 4.8.20

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Shouta looks at Nedzu with tired, irritated eyes.

Next to him, Yagi Toshinori, *All Might*, squirms like an octopus. He looks like one too, with his gangly limbs and sunken eyes.

“Sir, with all due respect, what the fuck.”

It's not a question, and Yagi chokes and coughs up fucking *blood* into a hankerchief. Nedzu doesn't look away from Shouta, beady eyes boring into his soul, but oh, he's not going down without a fight. Not when his students are on the line.

All Might is a symbol, not a teacher. He's loud and brash and fucking *coughing up blood*, Nedzu, what the *fuck*?

(The shitty little vindictive voice in the back of his head starts chanting *yell at him for Midoriya, yell at him, yell at him, fucking do it you know you want to, restore Midoriya's honor like a medieval knight!* He swats at it, blaming Hizashi's shitty 'cult classic' American movies.)

“Does he even have a teaching license?” he questions, making sure to keep his tone calm - if he raises his voice, his argument is invalid. “Is he authorized for this job? What happens when the vultures from the media get ahold of this and try to storm UA, huh? What about when he deflates in front of the kids because he's *reckless* and doesn't know how to pace himself or prioritize? What happens then?”

Nedzu takes a sip of his tea and sets the cup down on his desk.

“These are all good points, Aizawa. Yagi, if you’d like to address them?”

Yagi chokes (again), obviously not ready to be put on the spot (that’s something he needs to be prepared for as a teacher, he’s not qualified), and clears his throat loudly. “I, um, well, ah,” and he falters for a second before pulling himself up.

“I know that you might not be comfortable with it, Mr. Aizawa, but I approached Nedzu because I needed to. My time as All Might is coming to an end, and I need to find a successor.” *Oh, so it’s going to be a favoritism thing, huh?* “Nedzu has been gracious enough to let me interact with this new generation of heroes, and I will be working with the teachers here to learn how to best instruct them. I won’t be doing anything without consulting the staff here. The media doesn’t know about my teaching here yet, but I trust UA’s defenses enough to not let a few reporters get through the gates!” He laughs far too loudly, and it falls flat into awkwardness. Yagi clears his throat. “I will refrain from using the time I have before school hours, and if I do deflate then I will do it away from the children.”

Nedzu looks at Shouta, smiling thinly. “I believe those answers are satisfactory, Aizawa. If you should have another issue to address with Mr. Yagi, I ask that you do so outside of my office, as I have another matter to attend to.”

Shouto sees the dismissal for what it is and lifts himself off the couch, heading to the door. He feels Yagi close behind him and he wants to do something shitty, like brake-check him, but that’s rude and he’s in front of his boss, so he waits until they’ve made it to the staff room. Then all holds are off and he turns around to assess Yagi, and he doesn’t stop the frown pulling on his lips.

“So what made you ask for this position?”

Yagi manages a shaky smile and it just irritates him.

“Ah, well, it’s about my... situation, you see. There’s a student here who’s been recommended to me by a close personal friend, and I want to meet the boy and make sure he has what it takes to be the next symbol of Peace. My quirk is...” Yagi looks at him and bites his lip, obviously considering something he thinks is important. “I can trust you to keep a secret, can’t I?”

Shouta raises his chin, crosses his arms, and grunts an affirmative.

Yagi nods. “My quirk can be transferred through DNA. I’m looking to give my quirk to Toogata Mirio, as he was recommended to me by Sir Nighteye.”

Shouta is silent as he processes this. He needs coffee.

“Aizawa?”

“Nope. I’m going to make coffee, and *then* we’ll talk about this.”

Yagi has the good sense to look concerned, and Shouta makes his way to the coffee machine. This is going to be a *long* year.

-

Todoroki Rei gets flowers every week like clockwork. A nurse comes in every Sunday at 2 p.m. with a fresh bouquet and leaves with the old one. The fresh flowers are always on the cusp of perfection, and spend their time in her room in full bloom. They live out the week and spend until 2 p.m. drooping, and then the cycle begins again.

She stopped asking who they were from two weeks after the nurses did, and now she simply looks at them and smiles because maybe they’re from one of her children.

Maybe they’re from Fuyumi, who loved taking care of flowers with her in the garden. They’d spend *hours* outside, eating watermelon and watching bees dance around the blooms. Fuyumi would ask about the plants around the garden and Rei still has all the answers, tucked away in the back of her heart, where they’re safe.

Maybe they’re from Natsuo, who liked to play football in the yard on summer days, when the sun was hot and their ice kept them cool. She was awful at it, and he made sure she knew, but they got to laugh and have fun and play together.

Maybe they’re from Shouto. Maybe he’s forgiven her, even when she hasn’t forgiven herself. They’d sit inside and watch cartoons together, laughing and talking about heroes. About how he’d be one, just like All Might, and about how he’d save her. She remembers the look on his face when she...

She dismisses the idea. Shouto wouldn’t send her flowers, not after what she did to him.

Her mind rests on Enji and for a couple of seconds, she entertains the thought that *he* might be sending the flowers, but it's so laughable she might cry. He doesn't even know where he left her, so he can't possibly know her favorite flowers.

Maybe it's Touya.

He got out, she knows. She knows because Enji came storming in, just one and a half months after he locked her here, demanding to know where she'd put him. If she hadn't been on the verge of a panic attack, she'd have laughed in his face.

Rei hasn't *heard* from any of her children in years, much less hidden them away. If she could do that from a psych ward, she could damn well do it from the house, and she would have.

She would have taken them from that place in an instant if she'd had the guts. But she was weak and that weakness got Shouto scarred.

And so maybe the flowers are from Touya, who would light matches for her when she asked, who would help her in the kitchen, who was such a sweet boy. They'd sit inside and watch the rain and she'd sing to him. And when she came home with Shouto in her arms, all the kids crowded around but he looked like he was going to cry and he touched his baby brother's face like it was glass and she *misses* them so *much* it could *kill* her.

White heather and jasmine flowers make up the bulk of the bouquet, with white tulips dotting here and there. Little bursts of color come in the forms of rainflowers and sprigs of forget-me-nots, and it's beautiful and sad and hopeful.

The vase is crystal, and she has three days until a new bouquet comes in.

Protection. Unconditional love. Sincerity. I must atone for my sins.

Don't forget me.

Todoroki Rei turns from the flowers and to the window, looking out at the life she cannot touch.

Yes, she thinks. *These are Touya's flowers.*

Father wasn't mean until he was.

He wasn't really *anything*. At least, not to her.

She doesn't remember when things changed. Grandpa was there and he was nice enough, and then it was Father and Mr. Kurono and the men who looked like birds and pain, so much pain.

It was like that for so long that she doesn't even remember Grandpa's face, and that makes her sad. Grandpa never hurt her. Father is the one who hurt her.

He hurt her so bad that she's broken even now, when he's gone. She'll hear something or see something and she'll just freeze up, all still and quiet and she'll be back in her room at the compound. But then Papa will be there, and he'll say something nice and sweet and kind and he'll make everything bright again.

It's almost been a year.

It's been *so long*.

Eri doesn't know why she's still broken. She should be all fixed up by now. She's practiced her quirk with Papa, she's learned how to bake and help in the shop, and she knows that she doesn't have to do anything she doesn't want. But she's still not all right.

She's still got dirt on the inside.

She has a bad dream. Papa told her that those are called nightmares. She doesn't like nightmares.

In the dream, she and Papa are in her old room, and Father comes in. She freezes up and starts crying and Father reaches for her with his gloved hand but he doesn't grab her.

No, he grabs Papa instead. Papa moves in front of her *every time*, and he goes with Father. Papa smiles at her, and she tries to move, she tries so hard, but everything pushes against her like jello and Father and him are out of the room in the time it takes to go even one step.

She doesn't know what happens to Papa when the door closes, but he starts screaming every time. And she can't move and Father is outside the room with Papa and he's hurting Papa because she's not brave enough, because she's not strong enough, because Papa took her away and this is their punishment for being happy-

Eri doesn't realize she's started crying until Papa opens the door and lets light from the hallway spill into her room.

"Bug," he says quietly, softly, and she starts to cry harder because what if Father comes back for her, what if he makes Papa hurt just because he's a hero? She doesn't know what she'd do.

"Can I come in?"

She nods, because she's crying too hard to say yes, and she can't catch her breath and she's scared and angry and sad and every other bad feeling all at once and-

A hand, *Papa's* hand, runs softly through her hair and then she's being hugged. Papa's hugging her and he's petting her hair and he's whispering something nice. Her ear is against his chest and the rumble it makes is good, because it proves that Papa's here with her.

That they're not in her old room, where Father and Mr. Kurono can come in and hurt them.

"Hey, bug. Did you have another nightmare?"

She nods again, because she's shuddering and she can't make her mouth say anything.

"Okay. Can you tell me what you're scared about?" His voice is soft and his hand is still running through her hair.

She makes the hand-word they made for 'Father', which is different from the one they made for 'Papa', which is different from the one they made for 'dad'. Papa hums.

"I see." Papa shifts her around so she's sitting sideways on his lap and can see his face. It's his thinking face, the one he makes when he's not sure how to say something, and she curls a hand in his shirt.

"Eri, do you know what death is?"

It's an odd question, but she trusts Papa to make sure she knows what he means. Her crying is getting softer, going away, and she snuffles.

"It's when somebody's soul falls out of their body," she says thickly, "and can't get back in."

Papa smiles at her and nods and a little flower of relief blooms in her stomach. She got it right.

“Yes, that’s right. And when somebody’s dead, they can’t mess with things that living people are doing, dontcha think?”

Eri thinks about it, then nods again.

“So if Chisaki Kai is dead, then he can’t mess with what we’re doing. Does that make sense?”

Oh.

Oh.

“It does,” she whispers. Because it’s true. Father is dead, Papa made sure of it. He can’t hurt her anymore, he can’t make her and remake her and do all of those awful things.

“And Mr. Kurono?” she asks, just to make sure. Papa nods again.

“And Kurono Hari, yes. Everyone who hurt you, Eri. None of them can hurt you now. I promise.”

And Papa never breaks his promises.

“Okay,” she says quietly, and then she sags in Papa’s arms because her dream was *awful* and she doesn’t ever want Papa to scream like that in real life.

“If it would make you feel better, do you wanna know what I’d do when I had nightmares as a kid?”

Eri nods immediately, and feels her hand make the word for yes.

Papa smiles and maneuvers them off the bed, keeping her in his arms. “Well,” he starts, moving them around the room, “Mom always said that having a super secret safe spot, one that nobody else would ever know about, was a good start. That way, if anything bad ever *does* happen, I’d be all hidden away and safe! I’d crawl into my spot and take deep breaths and calm down.”

He grins at her and she manages a shaky smile back.

“So I think that you should find somewhere in the house where nobody else would ever find,” he explains gently, “somewhere you can go if you feel like something bad will happen. I had one in my room, so I think that in the morning, when you’re not super tired, you can look for one if you want.” She nods and yawns, and Papa gets his idea face. His grin softens into a smile and Eri feels a thousand times

better. “How about I tuck you in and tell you a story? And I can stay here, to make sure no more nightmares get you.”

Eri rests her head on Papa’s shoulder. “Yes, please.”

Papa sits them back on the bed and wiggles them around until they’re both under the covers and she’s snuggled into Papa’s chest.

“Once upon a time there was a queen, and she had a *beautiful* kingdom that she loved very much. However, she had no children to take the throne when she died and she didn’t trust her advisors, so one day she took a cloak and made off into the kingdom, where all her people were. There, she found a young boy who...”

Chapter End Notes

If you didn't get it at first, the 'Grandpa' Eri is referring to is the previous Yakuza head, the one Chisaki 'took over' for. Can I get an f in the chat for him?

Next chapter will be up by Jan 8th!

Come yell at me in the [discord!](#)

Chapter 14

Chapter Summary

Time skip and entrance exams :)

Chapter Notes

Sorry this is late gang, I had some irl stuff that really threw me for a loop! Turns out when you leave non-trauma environments for trauma-constant ones you kinda shut down for a bit lmaoooooooo just had to adjust a bit but I'm back on my bullshit so we're good

edited 4.8.20

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

The next few months pass by easily. Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas go by with little fanfare, and Eri's fifth birthday is a quiet thing that includes cake, presents, snuggles, and a computer call to Izuku's Mom and Dad. Dabi settles in with the League of Villains and starts sending updates to Izuku's burner phone, along with some memes that require the type of context Izuku really has to really think about to get.

Himiko settles in just as nicely at the bar, and Izuku starts prodding her about her story and quirk and whatnot; she gives him everything he wants with unsettling ease, and he finds that he really enjoys her type of chaos. He's still sending the wayward criminal to Tsukauchi, and takes the information Dabi gives him and sets up an untraceable one-way forward to Eraserhead.

(If Mr. Aizawa wants to talk to him as Harbinger, then he'll have to see him in person.)

All in all, it's good.

By the time spring rolls around, and therefore UA exams, Izuku has formed Hiichan into a mathematical genius and Eri is reading and writing at a first grade level with a rudimentary understanding of quirk mechanics. He's incredibly proud, and comes close to tears whenever he thinks about it. (He *really* needs to talk to her about going to school, though. She needs to be around kids her age to form proper communication skills.)

He's currently sitting in the café across from Hiichan, while Eri is sitting on one of the loveseats with a picture book in her lap. The fireplace is lit, because it's been a cold spring and he doesn't want to spend all his money on a heating bill (okay, there's literally no way he could do that, people pay way too much for information and he's frugal as it stands), and Hiichan's jittery from all the caffeine Izuku's pumped into him.

They're going over quadratic parabolas without calculators, so Hiichan actually *needs* the coffee, and Izuku doesn't blame him. Hiichan's made leaps and bounds, in all the study areas Izuku's helped him with - including but not limited to math, natural sciences, human sciences, art, history, English, and cooking. The cooking isn't really a study thing, but Hiichan has still gotten pretty far from the first time he tried to make fried rice.

"I don't get it," Hiichan complains, resting his head on the table. "Is the stretch one or two? And how the hell do I differentiate between them?" He looks up at Izuku imploringly with watery, distressed eyes, and Izuku takes pity on him, explaining the function needed to find vertical stretch.

Eri slips off her chair, holding her book to her chest as she yawns and makes her way over to them. Her eyes are droopy, probably because it's half an hour past her bedtime, and she leans heavily on Izuku, blinking slow eyes at the papers scattered on the table.

"Papa, can I go to bed now?"

Izuku's eyebrows raise in surprise - he didn't realize she was waiting for him.

"Yeah, bug, of course. Thank you for reminding me of the time." He turns to Hiichan, who's scowling at the paper in front of him, and smiles. "I'll be back down in a bit, so make sure to write down any questions you think of."

Hiichan nods without looking up, and his hair waves with the motion.

Izuku picks Eri up into a princess carry, and she snuggles her head into his chest as he makes his way into the back room and up the stairs, the book slowly slipping out of loose, tired fingers.

They get to her room and it's a bit of an ordeal to get her changed into her pyjamas, because she keeps falling asleep standing up. He sets the book on her nightside table and tucks her in under the blankets. She's

asleep the second her head touches the pillow, and so with a soft smile he kisses her forehead and makes his way back down to Hitoshi.

“Hey, Zuku, I’ve got a question.”

Izuku nods and picks up his pencil, ready to explain whatever needs explaining. “Go for it, Hiicchan.”

Hiichan sets his pencil down and leans back in his chair, a scowl marring his brow.

“Do you think that I actually have a chance? Of getting into UA?”

He’s a bit taken aback by the question, because it’s not something that’s even crossed his mind. Of *course* Hiichan has a chance.

“Hitoshi, please listen to me.” His voice is stern and Hiichan raises his eyebrows, leaning forwards a bit. “I think that you will pass the entrance exam. You’re clever and hard-working, and you want to be a hero because you want to *help* people. UA is the best hero school in the country, and not only are you a legacy student and a recommendation, but you are a good person. You’ve been studying with me, training with your dads, and even Eri’s been cheering you on.” He knows he’s getting too passionate, but he *needs* Hiichan to understand.

“Hiichan, I know that you’re worried, but you should trust in the efforts of everyone else. We’re all behind you, and even if you don’t get in, we still know that you’ll find a way. And it doesn’t matter anyway, because Nedzu would be a fool to not accept you. Do you understand?”

Hiichan nods, eyes wide and a bit teary. Izuku wiggles his way up in his chair, leaning over the table and reaching for Hiichan, who comes over willingly. Izuku enfolds him in a hug and rests his cheek on his shoulder.

“You’re gonna be great, Hiichan. I believe in you.”

-

Hitoshi is resolute in his belief that he only passed the written exam because of Izuku. The interview was easy enough; he’s had enough practice bullshitting people and he wants to be a hero more than anything, so he knows he’s aced it.

All that's left is the practical.

Which he is, admittedly, fucking terrified of. Dad and Pops have been training with him but he has no idea what it's going to be. If it's robots like the public exam he's boned, and he honestly can't think of anything else. There's a chance that they might be fighting against teachers or other heroes, but then there's a chance that they'll be fighting each other, too.

Or, maybe, a fucking obstacle course.

Dammit.

He side-eyes the group he's been paired with, drinking in the subtle hints they're giving out like candy.

Well, after noting their name tags, of course. Todoroki Shouto, Yoarashi Inasa, Honenuki Juzou, Yaoyorozu Momo, and Tokage Setsuna.

Todoroki is the exact opposite of Yoarashi, who's introducing himself loudly and being an all around nuisance. Quiet and cold-looking, and Hitoshi notes that he's seen the same expression on himself - during the Before Dad and Pops time. It's something to look into, so he makes a note of it.

Honenuki is confident looking, and he's engaged in a conversation with Tokage, who's grinning and laughing at something he said.

Yaoyorozu is quietly sitting by Todoroki with the type of ease that says familiarity. So they're... maybe not friends, but at least good acquaintances.

Which means that he's stuck in a dead end conversation with Yoarashi.

Who is loud.

Very loud.

The type of loud that means he'll spread information whether or not he's trying to do it, and Hitoshi doesn't need that kind of negative attention right now. Or ever.

"I think that this is a wonderful opportunity to get to know my prospective future classmates!" Yoarashi shouts, grinning widely and

there has never been an instance before this where he could see how not-Izuku a smile was. "You seem like a fun person, my name is Yoarashi Inasa! It's nice to meet you," and Yoarashi very unsubtly checks his nametag, "Shinsou! So how'd you get recommended!?"

Hitoshi's nerves are already frayed. He doesn't have the capacity for this, just wants to run the course and be done for today and fall asleep on his bed knowing that he's done his best.

Instead, he looks Yoarashi dead in the eye, and says, "Nepotism."

Yoarashi's grin freezes, and he hears the familiar choke of aborted laughter from Yaoyorozu. He leans to the side to pin her with a sharp smile and raised eyebrows, and she flushes beet red at being caught eavesdropping.

"Sorry," she says, covering her mouth with a hand, "I didn't mean to be rude, but that's what Todoroki and I were talking about as well."

Yoarashi unfreezes, probably ecstatic at having more conversation partners, and rounds on Yaoyorozu and Todoroki, but Hitoshi beats him to it.

"Oh? Who got you?"

Todoroki's face stays completely emotionless and Hitoshi's honestly a little jealous.

"Endeavor."

Hitoshi winces - he doesn't spend so much time with Izuku and *not* come out disliking that dumpster fire of a hero - but Yoarashi doesn't seem to get the message.

"Ah, you're Endeavor's son! That must be amazing, being the son of such a great hero!"

Hitoshi's eyes go wide of their own volition at that, and he sucks in a breath. Taking a look at Todoroki to gauge his reaction - maybe he'll help Izuku out with that court case he was talking about - he realizes that holy shit, Todoroki's going to straight up murder Yoarashi.

"Hey Yoarashi?" he asks, and Yoarashi whirls around, grinning.

"Yes!?"

"Endeavor's a piece of shit and I don't like hearing about him, so let's

avoid talking about him, ‘kay?’”

“What do you mean!?”

Yoarashi looks like Hitoshi’s blasphemed against the highest order, but Todoroki and Yaoyorozu look too relieved for him to feel bad about it.

“Yeah, I’d say sorry but I’m really not. We can talk about All Might though. I heard he’s going to be teaching here this year.”

That certainly gets everyone’s attention, including Tokage and Honenuki.

“Really?” Yaoyorozu inquires, eyebrows raising as she smiles. “That will definitely be interesting!”

Tokage pokes his shoulder, leaning over to see his face better. “How do you know?”

Hitoshi grins again, and his answer is the same as before. “Nepotism.”

Dad makes his way over to the group, giving them all his creepy students-only smile. “You guys are up soon. The course is three kilometers, whoever gets to the end first has the best chance of getting in.” That’s not exactly a lie, but Hitoshi knows that they rarely turn down recommendation students who aren’t just absolute garbage. Hitoshi just hopes that Yoarashi learns some tact before they have to share a classroom.

“On your mark,” and Hitoshi steels himself, leaning down to get into position, “get set,” and he takes a steadying breath, clearing his mind.

“Go!”

Hitoshi takes off.

-

He gets in. He doesn’t get first place, but he’ll be in 1-A. He’ll be a *hero student*. Tears don’t stop his laughter, but they do make it a bit more difficult to text Izuku the results.

He *did* it.

He did it.

-

Katsuki glares down at the envelope in his hands, sitting on his futon with his back against the wall. This fancy, shitty envelope decides his fate - not, of course that he thinks it won't be exactly what he wants - and he needs to open it to find out. The hag is yelling at him from downstairs, something about the dishes or whatever she wants to be on his ass about this time, but he ignores her because *this* is more important, *this* is what he's been dreaming for. This is why his palms sting and his shoulders ache and his ears ring.

Irritated at his own hesitance, he rips open the envelope and a disk falls out onto his bed. He stares at it blankly for a few seconds, waiting for it to do something, and isn't disappointed.

A holographic figure of All Might blinks to life and he grins as it explains to him that not only did he get first place in the exam, but he's going to be in 1-A and *All Might himself* is going to be one of his teachers.

This'll show Deku.

Chapter End Notes

Inasa: *is Like That*

Hiichan: *white guy blinking meme*

Again, sorry for the lateness! next chapter will be out by the 25th!

Welcome to the rawring 20s lmao

Please come yell with me in the [discord!](#)

Chapter 15

Chapter Summary

Hitoshi and Class 1-A, part 1

Chapter Notes

WARNING: this chapter contains malicious misgendering, unconsensual outing, and an anti-lgbt character. If this is triggering, I'll include a summary of the chap in the end notes. Thank you for your mindfulness.

edited 4.8.20

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

The 1-A classroom is empty. Probably because he came with his dads, who arrive early to prepare for the day. Dad's in the teacher's lounge, Pops' in his own homeroom class, and Hitoshi's engaged in a staring contest with the chalkboard.

The chalkboard is losing.

(Okay, maybe it's not, but Hitoshi's head is so far off in space that he's barely breathing, let alone blinking.)

And then the door slams open, jarring Hitoshi from his astral projection escapade, and the one and only Iida Tenya freezes in the doorway.

"Oh," says Tenya.

"Hey, Tenya," he replies, raising a hand in greeting.

Tenya clears his throat. "Hitoshi, it is nice to see you here." Tenya nods solemnly at him and turns to the board, probably memorizing the seating chart, then sets himself down where he's supposed to go.

Hitoshi's actually kind of pleased that Tenya's here. He knows him pretty well - since Dad and Pops and Uncle Tensei and Auntie Nemuri all went to UA together, it's hard not to. Honestly, he and Dad privately believe that Tenya popped out wearing square glasses and speaking formally, but Hitoshi doesn't mind because Tenya's not a dick about his quirk.

Also it's nice to have a familiar face in 1-A.

The silence they sit in is comfortable. Hitoshi's nodding off, Tenya's organizing his pens, and the room is peaceful. For about ten minutes, at least.

Then the first wave arrives.

Hitoshi's looked over the class list. Dad left it out on the table a few nights ago, so he knows the names and the faces they correspond to. It doesn't prepare him for how *loud* other people are.

The first person through the door is a pink-skinned, athlete type named Ashido, who's cackling at the person behind her. Said person has the hair and build of a firetruck - Kirishima. He's chattering loudly at the next two people through the door, and he remembers their names as Sero and Kaminari. The one that heralds the end of the wave is a purple-haired, punk-goth - Jirou - who's rolling her eyes so hard Hitoshi might actually get worried.

The second they notice that they're not alone in the room - Hitoshi can see it as their eyes lock onto him and he feels like a fucking rabbit - they round on him and Tenya.

"Hey, what is *up* my dudes?" Kaminari calls from the front of the room, and Hitoshi is desperately uncomfortable as he watches five pairs of curious eyes settle on him. He schools his face into indifference and shrugs, not answering the question. Ashido scrunches her nose for a second before grinning and leaning on Kirishima.

"Well, hi! I'm Ashido Mina, and this riot next to me is Kirishima Eijirou!" Kirishima grins and Hitoshi is very suddenly reminded of Izuku. "These two here," she gestures to Sero, Kaminari, and Jirou, who wave, "Are Sero Hanta, Kaminari Denki, and Jirou Kyouka! It's nice to meet you, and I'm super psyched to be here!"

Tenya, bless him, shoots up from his seat and bows, startling the group and Hitoshi a bit. "It's very nice to meet you all! I am Iida Tenya, and this is my friend Shinsou Hitoshi! I look forward to working with you while we learn to become the best people we can be! I hope we all get along, and follow the moral code of heroism accordingly!"

There's complete silence for a second, and Hitoshi wants to crawl into a hole as their wide eyes flit from Tenya to him and back again. And then-

“Holy shit you’re awesome-”

“Bro that’s so manly-”

“There’s no way you’re for real-”

“That’s super rad my guy-”

“That’s so totally cool-”

The wall of noise and mixing voices hits Hitoshi like a falling flowerpot and he closes his eyes, turning to face the wall. He counts by threes in his head, letting the sound wash over him and adjusting to it. It’s only going to get louder, so he might as well get used to it.

Wave one, as he’s referring to them, sits down and talks from their seats, and Hitoshi notices a couple of things. First is that Sero, Kaminari, and Ashido seem to be an item, and Kaminari uses they/ them pronouns. Second is that Kirishima and Ashido went to the same middle school. Third is that they’re all chronic memers.

As something of a meme professional himself, he can appreciate their arguments for and against deep-fried memes, but they’re just so loud.

So. Loud.

He manages to tune them out after a while, and watches as more of their classmates trickle in. Tsuyu, Uraraka, and Kouda come in at the same time, all smiling and talking softly. Well, Uraraka and Tsuyu are talking, Kouda is using sign-language. They seem to understand him perfectly well, however, and Hitoshi’s eyes follow the familiar movements easily. He’d had to pick up sign as a young kid, and with Dad and Pops signing fluently it was easy to keep up practice.

After them is a pair, Hagakure and Ojirou, who walk in with what Hitoshi assumes is their arms linked at the elbow. Hagakure is invisible, so he has to assume that Ojirou’s holding his arm that way for a reason. Ojirou sits down immediately, while Hagakure immediately inserts herself into the conversation Ashido’s holding by her desk with enviable ease.

The next through the door is Tokoyamai, who has a bird head, immediately followed by Shouji, who has six arms and a face mask that sends Hitoshi reeling back to his elementary school Naruto binging days. They sit down and don’t talk, and Hitoshi wonders if he’s found kindred spirits.

Yaoyorozu and Todoroki make their way through the door soon after, and Hitoshi feels a spark of relief that they're in this class as well. Yaoyorozu seems pretty cool, and Todoroki looks like he needs a five hour nap and a break from life, which he can empathize with. Todoroki sits at his desk and Yaoyorozu talks quietly with him, but Hitoshi can't hear their conversation over the general hubbub of the class.

He almost misses the entrances of Satou and Aoyama because he's doing his absolute best to zone out, but while the larger boy comes through the door quietly, the little French shit *must* announce his presence. It's not a fashion show, but Hitoshi thinks Aoyama'd be hard pressed to find a difference.

The next through the door is Mineta, and the look in his eyes gives Hitoshi pause.

Oh, it's not *evil*, per say, but it's definitely *bad*. The way he looks at the girls in the class makes his skin crawl, and the rising urge to punt this little creep out a window doesn't stop when he makes a comment about Tsuyu's chest.

A seriously transphobic comment.

Dad's going to kill this little shit, and he'll have to beat Hitoshi to the punch. Tsuyu looks wildly uncomfortable, and Uraraka's clenching and unclenching her hands. Hitoshi gets the impression that she's going to pop Mineta's head like a zit, and he wants to see it happen.

Unfortunately, before either of them can correct the little cretin, the last student shows up. It's Bakugou, and he blasts open the door - with his quirk, which isn't allowed - and sneers at all of them.

What a prick.

He immediately gets into an argument with Tenya about elitism, but he mentions his middle school and that gives Hitoshi pause.

Aldera Junior High.

That's the same middle school Izuku went to.

Explosion quirk. Starburst scars.

Bakugou Katsuki. Katsuki. Katchan. Kacchan.

Dad's going to have a fucking *field day* with this class.

-

Mineta doesn't make it to the practice field.

He makes another transphobic joke within earshot of Dad and Dad rounds on him like an avenging angel.

It's pretty glorious, actually.

"Excuse me," Dad drawls, and the entire class looks at them. "What did you say about Tsuyu?"

Mineta scowls, pouting. "I said that if I'm gonna appreciate a girl's body, then it should be real! Tsuyu isn't a real girl, he's got an adam's apple! And Kaminari is a dude, so he should act like it!"

Hitoshi hates the way that Tsuyu flushes, face ashamed as she looks down. Kaminari looks seriously hurt, and they send a panicked expression to dad, like they're going to be kicked out for not being cis.

That is very much not what happens.

Instead, Dad keeps his gaze locked on Mineta, and slowly begins to grin. Hitoshi knows that look, but Mineta doesn't seem to, and it's probably the only reason he's not pissing himself.

"Well then," Dad says, voice low and aggravated, "I guess you can't be in my class anymore."

Hitoshi relishes the way Mineta pales.

"Wh-what?"

"Because if you don't like boys who aren't boys," Dad continues, and *holy shit he went there*, "they you *really* won't like me." Dad shifts his weight and looks down his nose at Mineta and Hitoshi is *living*. "You were here because you had potential, but I don't think that's the case anymore. Pack your stuff and leave. I hope you didn't place all your bets on UA, because as of right now you're no longer a student here. Now get out of my sight."

Mineta looks around for support, but it hasn't even been half an hour and he's ostracized himself. He can't do anything but leave, and Hitoshi doesn't miss the way that most of the class relaxes. Tenya is as stiff as ever, of course, and Todoroki's expression hasn't changed since

he sat down, but that's probably just how he is.

Bakugou (Kacchan, this bastard is Kacchan, he'd bet his limited-edition Eraserhead action figure on it) is grinning and practically vibrating with energy. Well, if there was one redeeming quality to have, then watching transphobes get publicly humiliated is a good one to have, but Hitoshi's still half convinced that this is the kid who gave Izuku a black eye and a confidence issue.

"First lesson of the day," Dad calls, drawing their attention back from Mineta's walk of shame. "Watch your mouth. Heroes set an example, and the media isn't the only thing to watch out for. If you say things like *that*," and he gestures to the door Mineta just exited through, good riddance, "you're going to find yourself with a lot less backup when you need it. Respect others. That includes pronouns, preferred names, and privacy. If something like that happens again - if you're being harassed, or threatened, or made uncomfortable - tell one of the faculty, me included. It's too early in your heroic careers to be worried about villains like that."

Dad yawns, like the whole class isn't gaping at him, and pulls up his sleeping bag. "Now get out to the training field. I wanna see how many more of you are going home today."

The class files out, and Hitoshi deliberately goes slow so that he can stay back.

"I need to talk to you after class," he says quietly, and Dad nods.

"Will do. Let's go show these brats how it works."

Hitoshi grins. "Don't mind if I do."

Chapter End Notes

Summary:

Hitoshi goes to school. He meets Iida in the classroom, and they chat. They know each other bc Tensei and Shouta and Yamada and Nemuri all went to UA together, and also bc of course they do. Bakusquad is loud. Everyone else is loud. Todoroki and Yaoyorozu are a bit quieter. Mineta is gross. Hitoshi figures out that Bakugou is probably Izuku's "Kacchan", but doesn't have the chance to confirm.

Mineta is more gross. He says shit about Kaminari, who uses

they/them pronouns, and Tsuyu, who he assumes is trans. Shouta calls him on it and essentially says that if Mineta can't handle trans peers, he sure as shit won't do well with a trans teacher and kicks him out.

Shouta tells the class to watch their mouths and respect people. Then he tells them to head out to the practice field, and Hitoshi tells him that they should talk after class is finished.

End summary

Hey guys! If this seems short, that's because it is! My dog died recently and I got into a bit of a low, but I'm doing better now. She was a sweet dummy, and I'm glad she's not hurting anymore, but please don't comment about it because it will make me sad.

Anyways, hope you all liked the chapter! It went on a bit of a tangent, but I gotta say I really can't complain lol

Next chap will be out around Feb. 8th, so look out for that!

Come say hi in the [discord!](#)

Chapter 16

Chapter Summary

Shouta and Hitoshi talk about Bakugou, with a fun little teaser at the end ;)

Chapter Notes

I'm watching Brian David Gilbert as I post this. God is real and I will kill him.

ALSO! Warning for a panic attack near the end of the chapter! It's not told from the point of the one having it, but it's still there so read at your own discretion.

edited 4.8.20

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Shouta is proud of Hitoshi. He doesn't get last place; no, he gets 16th easily, and Tooru is lucky that she's got potential, or else she'd be gone like the fucking lecher. Or maybe not like him, because Shouta has a drop of respect for Tooru.

Whatever.

"What's up, kid?"

Hitoshi's fidgeting on the couch, maybe because Nemuri is playing with his hair, and he's rocking in his chair even though the last time he did this he smacked his head on the wall.

"So, uh, you know how Bakugou went to Aldera?"

"Yeah?"

"And you know how Zuku went to Aldera too?"

Uh.

"And how Bakugou's really aggressive, and how his quirk is explosions and Zuku's got starburst scars all up and down his arms? Or how Katsuki lends itself *really* well to 'Kacchan'?"

Son of a fucking-

“Who’s Kacchan, Shou?”

Shouta closes his eyes in an attempt to keep his quirk tamped down. And his surprisingly immediate, fucking unending fury.

Hitoshi answers for him. “Kacchan is the name of Izuku’s childhood bully. Like, went-way-too-far-way-too-long-ago type bully. He’s seriously abusive and Zuku’s all sorts of fucked up for it. And I need to verify, but I’m pretty sure he’s in my and Dad’s class. So. Yeah.”

Nemuri purses her lips, drawing her hand from Hitoshi’s hair. “I want to know who Izuku is, but you *know* how I feel about bullying, so you tell me what he says and we’ll figure out a plan of action.”

She’s really not helping Shouta’s impulse control.

“Nemuri, we’re teachers,” he sighs, rubbing his eyes. “We’re not going to beat him up in an alley, so stop looking at me like that. Not only is that illegal, it wouldn’t help the situation.” He can do this. It’ll be fine. It’ll be *fine*. It’s not like he’s been trying to find out who this kid is for a while, and it’s not like he’s surrounded by people who’d help him hide a body, and it’s not like he’s going to *do* anything bad, they’re both *children*, *how the fuck did he get into this situation-*

“So, uh, can I beat him up?”

Hitoshi.

Shouta considers it. He’d have to give him detention, and it’d be unheroic to sow discord within the classroom, but Bakugou needs to get his shit handed to him.

But Bakugou is also a child, no matter how Shouta feels about him, and it’s his job to steer the kids in a good direction. That includes healthy conflict resolutions.

If only he wasn’t a hero. And a teacher. And morally bound not to waffle stomp children into the concrete.

He takes a deep breath and lets it free slowly.

“You... can’t beat him up. We’re going to talk to Izuku before anything else, to verify, and then we’re going to talk to him about what we can do about this.” Hitoshi narrows his eyes, and Shouta narrows his eyes right back. “Izuku trusted us with this information, so us using what he told us to dole out justice is a bad thing. We wait

for his consent before we do anything, and we respect his wishes if he doesn't want us to do anything. That way, when Bakugou says shit that *doesn't* relate to Izuku, we can sanction him like old America."

Hitoshi's eyes light up, and an evil grin creeps onto his face.

"So," his son drawls, and Shouta purses his lips, "you're saying that when Bakugou blows up - because he will, I can feel it - we can go off on him? We just have to wait for it instead of acting immediately?"

Nemuri snickers and Shouta's suspicious. "Yes," he says, drawing out the word. "We can't do anything about what he's done to Izuku until we get the go ahead, but if he pulls shit before that we can take disciplinary action."

"Babe, you should go to Nedzu." Nemuri's braiding her hair, but her eyes are focused on him. "Make sure he gets the situation before anything happens, or else you could get in trouble."

"There's no need to worry about that, I've been listening in!"

Hitoshi moves before Shouta can process anything, launching himself off the couch and under one of the breakroom tables. Nemuri startles and her fingers get caught in her hair, falling over on her side with a yelp of "Fuck!" Shouta himself has one hand reaching for his scarf, the other to his back pocket for his phone.

Nedzu is hanging upside down from the ceiling.

"Well," he chirps, smiling, "that was quite a reaction! Good response time from all of you, I'm quite proud!"

Nemuri is grinning, eyes alight with badly concealed anger, as she pulls herself up. "Hey Nedzu, how weird seeing you here. Especially when you barely ever come down here, because this is the teacher's break room, *not the principal's office.*"

Nedzu laughs and shakes his head, releasing whatever hold he had on the ceiling and dropping down onto the couch. "Well, you never know what kind of information you're missing when you stay in one place all day!"

That's bullshit, and Shouta knows that Nedzu knows that that's bullshit, because he's *seen* the setup of mics and speakers and cameras that the principal's office has. Fuck, he's looked over them himself, because last year there was a shitload of stolen items and the suspect

was one of the hero students. (It wasn't, it was a stray cat that had come to live on campus. He named her Miyuki and he loves her and feeds her when the students aren't around.)

"Alright, well." Shouta's eyes slide over to Hitoshi, who's pale and twitching under the table. Hitoshi shakes his head and draws his knees to his chest, and it looks like he's focusing on breathing. Dammit, Nedzu. His eyes slide back to his boss. "You know what's going on now. I'll talk to Izuku, figure out what should be done there, and I'll curb any bad behaviors from Bakugou."

Nedzu nods. "In the meantime, I'll look over his records. UA has a policy against bullying, so I'll find out why his application wasn't flagged. If that's all, I'll be leaving now!"

He makes his way to the door and leaves, and Nemuri sighs. "That was awful. My hair's messed up."

Shouta's hair is always messed up, but he agrees that it was awful. He ignores her, though, instead lifting himself out of the chair and over to the table that Hitoshi's still under.

Crouching down, he rests his hands on his knees. "Hey, kiddo. You all there?"

Hitoshi takes a second, then shakes his head. Shouta nods, not moving.

"Can I sit with you?"

Another moment, and then he nods.

Shouta works his way under the table, careful not to touch his kid. He mimics Hitoshi's position, drawing his knees to his chest, and catches Nemuri's eye as she nods solemnly and leaves the room.

"Can I touch your back?"

Hitoshi immediately shakes his head, curling in tighter on himself. "No," he rasps, voice low, and Shouta's heart breaks for him. Hitoshi doesn't deserve this, doesn't deserve to feel like this.

Shouta nods.

"Can you tell me what triggered it this time?"

Hitoshi fidgets with his hands, curling them and uncurling them. "It."

He pauses, and Shouta waits for him to continue. "It surprised me. It was. Auntie was playing with my hair. I was on edge because of Bakugou and Zuku. I-I couldn't recognize the voice. It came up behind me and I felt Auntie freak out, and I saw you stiffen up and I had to move. I couldn't." He pauses again, lowering his head even more. "I couldn't freeze up. It's dangerous."

Shouta wants to throw every single person who was in charge of Hitoshi's welfare before him and Hizashi in jail. It's not the first time, and it won't be the last, but still.

"Okay," he murmurs, keeping his voice low. "Can you follow my breathing?"

Hitoshi nods, and uncurls himself a bit. Shouta exaggerates his movements, breathing in through his nose and out through his mouth, and Hitoshi follows him. As he goes on, Hitoshi gets a little color back and loosens up more, and the subtle tremor in his hands goes away.

"Thanks," he whispers.

"Of course," Shouta replies, eyes focused on a smudge on the ground. "It's not a problem, kiddo. I'm your dad, I'm here for you."

Hitoshi nods and closes his eyes. "I think there's something up with Todoroki, as well," he says. "Endeavor's awful, we both know that, but he's got a look in his eyes that I don't like."

"What kind of look?" Shouta asks, and sometimes it really pays off to have a guy on the inside. Hitoshi's good at catching unhealthy behaviors in others.

"The kind of look I had when you guys first came around."

Shouta nods. He remembers it, because it shows up in his nightmares sometimes.

When Shouta and Hizashi first met Hitoshi, Hitoshi's eyes were blank and he didn't speak and it was a long, long road to figuring out why. And then it was a long, long road to repairing the damage.

"Alright. Keep up the good work, kid. I'll look into it."

Hitoshi leans into his side, and Shouta rests his head on top of Hitoshi's.

“Thanks, dad.”

“No problem, kiddo.”

-

“Hey, Todoroki. Wanna hang out after school?”

“... Sure.”

“Cool. I know just the place.”

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading! Poor Hitoshi, amiright? I'll probably get into his background at some point, probably in [Connection]. Next up: Shouta meets Toga, Todoroki meets Izuku and Eri, lots of fun :)

Next chapter will be up by Feb 22.

Come tell me how I did in the [discord!](#)

Chapter 17

Chapter Summary

Shouto and Hiichan and Izuku walk into a café

Chapter Notes

Hey Gucci Gang! This is half a week late, I know, but my internet cut out and then nobody told me it was back on! Hope you like it!

edited 4.8.20

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

His name is Shinsou Hitoshi, and Shouto doesn't know why he agreed to come with him after school. He's being led down back alleys and side streets and he thinks that if Shinsou is going to attack him, he should do it soon. Shouto has errands he could be doing for Fuyumi right now.

The sides of nameless buildings tower over them ominously as they walk, and Shouto can feel his shoulders drawing in on themselves. He doesn't like feeling trapped.

And then Shinsou stops in front of a very small, signless shop with a filigreed window looking in on a cluttered room. Shinsou opens the door and a bell rings, then turns and gestures for Shouto to follow him in.

Shouto thinks this might be the peer pressure Fuyumi warned him about, and trails after Shinsou. The door closes softly behind them as he soaks in the view of the shop, trying to figure out whether or not this is a kidnapping attempt, and decides that it isn't. The shop's just a shop.

It's nice, actually. There's a chess table by the window, some loveseats by an unlit fireplace, and all other surfaces - walls especially - are covered in books. Books and potted plants. Mostly succulents.

Shinsou is standing to the side, just looking at him. And then movement draws his attention to the counter. Shouto follows Shinsou's gaze to a... boy. His age, forest green hair, absolutely covered in freckles. Unassuming face, with a shirt that says "this post was made by beat up Endeavor gang" and Shouto realizes that oh, this

is where he's going to be spending *every single second of his free time*.

He makes a mental note of where the shop is and his opinion of Shinsou Hitoshi goes up dramatically.

"Hello Hiichan, give me just a second, I'll be right with you," the boy says, and Shouto notices that 'Hiichan' is a rather cutesy name and also that Shinsou is blushing. Pretty heavily, in fact.

Shouto is witnessing a crush. Shinsou has a crush on coffee shop boy.

Coffee shop boy looks up.

His face is very cute.

His face is also surprised. However, it's not surprised in an 'oh, I wonder who you are' way. It's surprised in a 'oh, why are you in this place at this time' way.

Coffee shop boy recognizes him, and Shouto probably should have expected this. His father has been slamming his face on every piece of media possible, touting around the fact that he has a dual-sided quirk. He prepares himself for the 'honor' of being Endeavor's son, and pointedly doesn't sigh.

"Oh! I know you!"

He feels his shoulders tensing against his will.

"I know that uniform! You're one of Hiichan's fr-friends!"

Huh. He wasn't expecting that.

Coffee boy smiles at him and it's anxious, but it's real and Todoroki very suddenly gets why Shinsou blushed.

"My na-name's Mi-Midoriya Izuku, it's nice to me-meet you!"

"I'm... Shouto. Nice to meet you as well."

-

Dabi's little brother is in his coffee shop and Izuku is very much ready to scream.

Todoroki Shouto, age 15, blood-type O, son of Todoroki Rei, eugenics experiment of Todoroki Enji, youngest of four children, UA student,

Hiichan's classmate.

And he's gotta pretend like he doesn't know him, hasn't been watching him from CCTV cameras since he pestered Dabi into spilling his tragic backstory.

Shouto is also very pretty, like Hiichan is.

Izuku smiles shakily at Shouto (and thank goodness he doesn't have to call him Todoroki, because that's just not very fun) and realizes very suddenly that he's wearing one of his anti-Endeavor shirts.

Oh well. It doesn't seem like Shouto minds.

"Is there anythi-thing I can get-get you guys? Eri's upstairs ta-taking a na-nap, but I think I'll be okay enough com-company!" His eyes flicker to Hiichan's, who's nodding.

"I'll take a Raspberry Meowcha, and he'll have an iced Rosepaw," Hiichan says, and Izuku sees Shouto raise his eyebrows. Izuku knows - because he's watched the Todoroki family for a while now - that Shouto prefers tea over coffee, and so he wonders how Hiichan knows as well. Honestly, it's probably a lucky guess.

Izuku is proud. Hiichan deserves friends.

"Coming right up!" Hiichan hands him 1000 yen and tells him to keep the change, and he clicks on the coffee maker and the kettle. Making sure that Hiichan and Shouto are comfortable, he slips into the back to warm up the pastries. Tiny rosewater cookies for Shouto, and homemade raspberry jam on a buttermilk biscuit for Hiichan. They go into the warmer and Izuku... takes a moment.

Dabi's littlest brother is in Izuku's café, where he can smother him in good things and make sure Endeavor doesn't touch him.

This is "watch out for my family" taken to the next level and Izuku is going to explode.

"Oh my gosh. Oh my *gosh oh my gosh ohmygosh!*" Izuku bounces in place, eternally grateful for the walls and door that separate him from the main room. Euphoria and anticipation trickle down his spine and pool in his legs as he rushes around the back room, grabbing cups and ice and plates and tiny forks.

"Oh my gosh. Okay." He huffs, and curls his hands into fists. "Alright.

I've got this. I just need to make a good impression. I'll be fine. If all else fails, I have pictures of Eri from Halloween on my phone." The timer for the warmer goes off.

"Alright. It's fine, this is *fine*, everything is fine," he whispers, plating the sweets. He bumps the door open and sets the plates and cups down on the counter, then prepares the drinks. Tea mix in the hot water, then let it steep. Coffee and milk and raspberry syrup in the other cup, then whipped cream on top of that. Tea mix out, then ice, then both cups on the plates and they're ready.

He brings them over to Hiichan and Shouto, and where Hiichan looks endlessly pleased at his setup, Shouto looks... surprised.

"Is it," and Izuku hesitates, because Hiichan ordered for Shouto, and then presses on. "Is it no-not what y-you wan-wanted?"

Shouto looks up at him sharply, and dang it because Izuku's messed up already, and Shouto probably doesn't even want to be here, and he should've just kept his mouth shut, an Shouto probably doesn't even-

"It's fine. I just didn't expect cookies."

Oh.

Hiichan chimes in, mug in his hands and biscuit half gone, "Yeah, Izuku doesn't do anything halfway. He and his mom made the menu and Izuku found all the pastries that go with the drinks." Hiichan looks proud and Izuku feels his face heat up. Praise is a wonderful thing. "I bet you 500 yen that Izuku came up with the recipe for the cookies."

Both of them look at him and he ducks his head. Yeah, he's blushing now. "Ye-yeah. And I, ah, I ma-made the jam for the bis-biscuit myself, too."

Hiichan takes a moment to process, and then grins. "I *knew* it."

Shouto looks at the cookies consideringly, and pops one in his mouth. He chews, swallows, and takes a sip of the iced tea. He looks up at Izuku and tilts his head.

"This is good. I'm going to come here again."

Izuku's heart explodes and he nods meekly, beaming.

“I’d be de-delighted to have-have you back!”

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading!!!! I have some stuff I have to get done that’s probably going to eat my time, so I think that the next chapter will be up by the 14th of March.

We’re going to get into Shouta’s head next (because I’m super excited to have him meet Toga), and I might be super mean to Eri! We’ll see!

Come say hi and chat in the [discord!](#)

Chapter 18

Chapter Summary

Shouta meets Himiko, Harbinger eats abusers for breakfast, and Dabi sleeps on a couch

Chapter Notes

This was a midnight passion play that wouldn't leave me alone? Like I cranked it out in about an hour last night and I went over it and I guess this is how it's going lmao

TRIGGER WARNING: Underage drinking, but it's not enough to inebriate him. Keep yourselves safe!

edited 4.8.20

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

The bartender's new. And also fucking terrifying.

The second Shouta steps into the bar, her eyes zero in on him and her face brightens into a concerning grin. Consider him concerned.

He approaches the bar slowly, and her grin only widens. Her teeth are pointed.

"Hello," she sings, tilting her head ever so slightly - just enough to be unnerving. "My name's Toga! Toga Himiko! Are you the thorn that Birdy and Baby were talking about?"

First of all, he doesn't know who 'Birdy and 'Baby' are, and secondly, he has no idea whether or not he's 'thorn', or why he might be.

Also she probably shouldn't introduce herself by name. But he's not going to tell villains how to be better villains, so it probably doesn't matter.

"I'm here to see Harbinger," he says warily instead of answering her question, and she giggles.

"Oh, so you *are!* Well just a second, and I'm sure he'll be out! He's going to be *so excited* to see you! I'll make you something... sweet while we wait!" And she spins on her heel, humming a song that he

doesn't know. It's graphic and morally discouraging, but he's here for a reason so he doesn't allow it to phase him. He watches her like a hawk as she makes his drink, but she doesn't slip anything harmful in.

Well, other than a frankly ridiculous amount of rum. And no matter how sweet of a tooth he has, that much whipped cream will *never* be okay.

She sets the glass down on the counter, and even though she's made it clean he's not planning on drinking it. He doesn't drink, and he sure as hell doesn't drink on the job. He's waiting for a potentially dangerous, mildly criminal acquaintance to show up.

"Birdy! You're back!" Toga jumps in place and claps, cheering with a grin on her face. She places a hand on the counter next to him and he sees it coming, but watching her *swing herself* over the counter and into the arms of Harbinger is bad for his blood pressure.

"Hello, Koko! It's so nice to see you," Harbinger croons, holding Toga in a princess carry and twirling around once while she cackles. He sets her down on the counter and pulls up a stool next to Shouta, and he watches them both, *at the same time*, tilt their heads to the side as they look at him.

"What brings you back into my lair, Eraserhead?" Harbinger leans forward, breaking into his personal space, and Shouta gets the distinct impression that he's smiling. "Did I not do a good job, leaving the folder with your... wards?" Harbinger leans back sharply and snickers and holy shit, he *hates* that.

"Don't talk about them," and he can keep himself from snarling, but only just. "In fact, don't go near them again. And no, the folder was fine. Better than fine. Tsukauchi and I want to know if your guy has anything else we can use. We need... more." Loathe as he is to admit it, the officers are dead in the water. If they're going to take the League down, they need more.

Harbinger has stopped laughing. He can't see behind the backlit goggles, but Shouta recognizes a contemplative posture when he sees one. He might get something tonight.

"Ask me your questions and I'll exchange information for a favor. I'm keeping the old favor for later, but I've got something I want some help with."

Shouta doesn't like the sound of that, but *wow* he doesn't have a

choice. “Alright.”

Harbinger clasps his hands together and sighs. “Wonderful.” He looks to Toga, and then the drink she set on the counter. He looks back up at Toga, who’s shaking her head.

“Koko, how much alcohol is in that?”

Toga is suddenly very interested in her sleeves. “So much, Birdy. Like, *way* too much.”

Harbinger looks back at the glass and Shouta doesn’t know what’s going on, but he fucking does *not* want that drink anywhere near anyone in this room.

“Eraserhead, what do hangovers feel like?”

“Birdy, don’t drink that. It’s going to taste so bad. Please let me make you something else. It’ll, like, kill you. Birdy.”

Harbinger reaches over and picks up the glass, and Shouta watches in horrified wonder, suddenly irritated at the low lighting.

“Birdy, I swear. Don’t, you’ll regret it.”

“I don’t know, Koko, I’ve had a day.”

“*Birdy.*”

Harbinger lifts the edge of his mask and takes a fucking huge swig. Swallows it.

And then doubles over and coughs, leaning over the counter.

“Koko! What the heck! Why would you do that to thorn? Why’d you let me do that?”

Toga, scandalized, brings her hands to her face. “I told you. Birdy, I told you. Birdy *no*.”

“I’m never drinking again, that was *awful*. Is that why people like alcohol? I don’t understand.”

That was. Harbinger’s first time drinking alcohol.

Shouta can’t wrap his head around that, even though there’s no reason it shouldn’t be true. Criminals can do illegal things and not drink. That

can happen. Yeah.

“Anyways, thorn,” and Shouta brings himself back to attention, focusing on Harbinger’s words, “I kind of don’t want to be sober for this.” Harbinger clears his throat. “I’ll give you everything I can, but I need your assistance.”

Shouta feels appropriately wary, and narrows his eyes. “Assistance with what, exactly?”

Harbinger’s presence suddenly sharpens like a knife, and the bar gets noticeably quieter as his shoulders stiffen and his voice loses all levity. Toga stops smiling and Shouta feels his eyes get dryer, even though he’s not using his quirk.

“I’m going to remove Endeavor from his place as the number two hero. I’ve found that I don’t take well to abusers in positions of power, and I’d rather not give you more paperwork by killing him. I want you to help me take him down.”

Well, *fuck*.

-

Darling

Hey I’m gonna beat the shit outta your dad and reunite you with your family do you want anything else while I’m dismantling the government??

Y’All Might Burn Victim

Chips

Also

Crusty mcfuck wants to beat up the kids

And also??

He’s not, like, bad, it’s his weird fucking ‘Sensei’ so maybe don’t,,
like,,,,,, kill him?

He’s not straight evil? He just needs a fuckton of therapy

Lmao

Darling

Wonderful! I'll get on that immediately! Thanks babe ♥️📱

Y'All Might Burn Victim

Yeah np flower

Dabi looks up from where he's laying on the couch, and stares at Kurogiri.

Mist Mcfuck.

His gaze slides to Shigaraki.

Crusty Mcfuck.

He looks back at his phone and snickers, because that's it. There are a bunch of grunts that come and hang around the bar - and that's just sweet; he moved out of one bar and into another, does he have a problem? - but they don't really *do* anything. Nah, it's Kurogiri, who's got good mom energy, and Shigaraki, who's got some serious issues and a desperate need for chapstick and a skincare routine.

And him, who's just kinda... there.

All the other guys have places to go. And he knows, he *knows* that he's got a place whenever he wants it with Harbinger, but he needs to do this job. But yeah, the other guys have places, and he showed up with a duffle bag and a grin and Kurogiri gave him a room above the bar. It's nice.

It helps that Kurogiri's teaching him a bunch of new drinks. He likes knowing shit.

Oh, yeah. And Giran, who's an asshole if he's ever seen one. He came to headquarters with a broken nose, a fat lip, and some rancid words about Darling, and it was all he could do to not bust out laughing in the sleaze's face. And then Giran said some fucking *rude* things about gay people, and Dabi gave him a black eye.

He looked prettier with his face fucked up, and Dabi relished the disgust on the asshole's face when he told him so.

"What're you smiling at?"

Dabi looks over at Shigaraki, who's curled up into himself on a barstool, and grins.

"I've got a beau back home, and we have no way to talk but through letters. My daddy doesn't like him, so our love is forbidden, but I'm not going to let that stop me. Also he's going to dismantle the government and reunite me with my family."

Shigaraki stares at him, blinks, and scowls. "Fine. Don't tell me."

Dabi looks back down at his phone and flips over to the photos app, pulling up the folder that holds all the pictures of his family. He flicks through them and settles on one of his siblings together.

He takes a good few minutes just letting himself re-memorize their faces, and then locks his phone and closes his eyes. He falls asleep to the knowledge that Endeavor is going to jail (because when babe says something's going to get done, it does), and that he'll finally be able to see his family again.

He doesn't have nightmares this time.

Chapter End Notes

Hey! I hope you liked it! I'm still gonna give myself that three week period bc March is going to kill me, but I wanted to get this out! Eri isn't in this one, I know, but she'll be in the next one! You guys are going to beat me up in a back alley and I'm so excited! So the next chapter will be out by March 21st!

Come throw rocks at me in the [discord!](#)

UPDATE

Chapter Summary

An update

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Hello and welcome!

So I'm... the author.

(Obviously.)

And well, as an author, I like to write. And sometimes, I like to look at what I write, to make sure it's up to snuff.

So I was reading comments, and when I read comments, I also read bits of the chapter that they're referring to. And guys? Some of what I wrote wasn't exactly what I'd call "up to snuff".

I'm rewriting.

I've already finished and posted the updated version of [Content]. I don't expect this to take a godawful amount of time, but it will take a bit. Luckily, I'm in quarantine right now, so I have quite a bit of time to work on this. If you're not on the discord - and you don't need to be, don't worry - then check back in a week or two? I'm not sure exactly how long this will take, but I will be working on this for the foreseeable future. If you're on the discord, I'll make sure you guys know when everything's been wrapped up.

This isn't something to stress about. I just wanted to make sure that you guys know why I didn't update yesterday, and that I plan to keep updating.

I know that some of you guys must be stressed about the COVID-19 pandemic, and I am too. I don't like the way it causes panic, and I can't stand that it's making me and my friends anxious. I want you all to know that while most, if not all of us are quarantined, we're not actually apart. We are still connected, whether it be through texting or calling or face time or even just stories, like this one. None of us are truly alone, even if we can't see each other because of this virus. Don't

give up hope.

And also make sure to wash your hands.

I'll be updating [Policy] soon, both with the edited version and a new chapter.

Thank you for your patience, and I hope you have a peaceful day. :)

Chapter End Notes

Here's the [discord](#) if you'd like it

Chapter 20

Chapter Summary

The Aizawa-Yamada family talks about Kacchan with Izuku, and then Izuku begins to work on his Endeavor problem

IMPORTANT NOTICE IN CHAPTER NOTES

Chapter Notes

So it seems that every time I get super excited, I get ahead of myself and then karma bites me in the ass! For those of you that have already read Chapter 20, this is different! The first part is the same, but I realized that I looked at the wrong set of notes and I jumped, like, a whole arc ahead. This will mean more chapters, but it'll also mean that we can't have that angst right now like we thought. Sorry gang, I'll make it worth your while.

Thank you for your continued patience with me!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Shouta is proud of Hitoshi.

(He's always proud of Hitoshi, but right now it's a *thing*.)

Probably because Hitoshi is literally *t-posing* on Midoriya, who's beet red and wringing his hands.

"Answer the question, Zuku," Hitoshi says, in his deepest voice. Eri's watching from the chair next to him, eyes wide and fixed on Hitoshi. "Who is Kacchan?"

"Hiichan, I don't think that's a good idea."

Hitoshi pauses, and then waves his hand slowly through the air, face deadpan. "You *will* tell me who Kacchan is."

Hizashi chokes on his drink and it comes out his nose - *gross* - as he laughs as quietly as possible. Izuku's eyes narrow and his face bunches up.

"Your jedi mind tricks don't work on me, Shinsou Hitoshi. Only money." Izuku turns his head up and sniffs. "No money, no parts, no

deal.”

Hitoshi’s actually stumped for a second, and Hizashi might actually be having a stroke on the carpet. Then Hitoshi nods once and pulls out his wallet and Izuku crumbles.

“Oh, Hiichan, no, I didn’t actually mean that, it’s just...” Izuku peters out and Hitoshi looks like he feels pretty bad. Shouta is just sitting in the chair opposite Eri and holding open a book that she’s abandoned in favor of this spectacle before them. Hizashi is still on the floor, and it takes a lot of his willpower not to kick him.

Their kids are having a bonding moment, Hizashi. Get your shit together.

And so (obviously) Shouta interrupts.

“Izuku, how do you want me to handle Bakugou Katsuki?”

And the shit seems to hit the fan for Izuku, who goes pale as a sheet.

“Oh, Kacchan,” he whispers, looking down.

“Yeah, that’s what’s going on,” Hitoshi says, scowling. “I want to put hair removal gel in his shampoo and make him do the chicken dance on live TV. He’s in my class, Izuku, and he’s an asshole.”

Eri raises her hand.

That’s... super fucking cute.

“What’s up, bug?” Izuku asks, taking the distraction.

Eri tilts her head in a way that kind of reminds him of Harbinger - and holy shit is he not going there. Damn. No. Her eyes are wide and her tiny eyebrows pull her face into a frown.

“Kacchan calls you names, right? And he’s mean to you just ‘cause?”

Izuku hesitates and nods. “Yes, bug. He does.”

“And he put scars on your arms?”

Izuku pales likes getting something that Shouta isn’t, but nods again. The atmosphere has soured, and even Hizashi looks a little worried.

“Then is Kacchan like Father?”

Oh.

Oh.

Shouta looks sharply over at Hitoshi, who's staring, wide-eyed and horrified, at Eri, and he hears Hizashi take in a sharp breath.

Izuku looks like he's seconds away from bursting into tears.

"I-" Izuku's voice cracks, and Shouta knows that if Eri's biological father wasn't dead, he'd put the man in the ground himself. Izuku tries again. "Eri, Kacchan was a kid, like me. He didn't know any better." Hizashi places a comforting hand on Shouta's arm and Hitoshi looks down at the floor.

"Kacchan isn't like him, bug. Not at all." Izuku moves around Hitoshi and kneels at Eri's feet. He slowly reaches out a hand and Eri puts her own into it, and Shouta feels like he's intruding. Like this is private.

"Your father was a bad, bad man who hurt people because he thought it was fun," Izuku whispers. "Kacchan hurts people because he doesn't know that there's another option. It's not good, and he's not a good person, but he's not evil. Not like... like that man was."

Eri nods solemnly. "And you'll beat up everyone who is a villain?"

Izuku gives her a shaky smile. "Absolutely."

"And... you'll make sure that no one beats you up?"

Izuku hesitates, and Hizashi takes in a deep breath. Shouta can't blame him. Hitoshi looks like he's hanging off of Izuku's every word, like he wants to shake his friend until he makes the promise.

"I can't promise that I'll never get beat up, but I'll try super hard. Is that okay?"

Eri bites her lip and takes a second.

"Then you'll let me help? When you get hurt?"

Shouta is going to waffle stomp every single degenerate who thinks that they can touch a single hair on these kids heads. He's going to fucking set up a 'round the clock watch, take out a favor from Harbinger, whatever it takes to keep them safe.

"Of course I'll let you help, Eri. Any time you want."

-

Izuku asks Mr. Aizawa and Mr. Yamada and Hiichan to stay downstairs as he takes Eri up for a nap. Talking about Kai always tires her out - a perfectly good response to a perfectly shit villain. He tucks her in and kisses her forehead, and she's asleep before he closes her door.

Going back downstairs and into the shop is... definitely something. He hesitates just outside the door and yeah, he knows that eavesdropping is wrong, but making sure that he knows what to say is more important than any moral compunctions. And they're talking about him, and about Eri.

It's Hiichan's voice first. "You said that Eri's biological father is dead, right?"

It's Mr. Aizawa next. "Yes, Hitoshi. He's dead."

"And Eri is going to stay here, with Izuku? Like, forever?"

"She's here legally. She's related to Midoriya, and he's a capable guardian, so there's no reason she wouldn't be able to."

There's an exhalation and then someone's talking too low for him to hear - it sounds like Mr. Yamada, and then the room is quiet.

Izuku takes a breath and let's his face slip into a smile - it's small, but Eri is safe and his friends are here and there's no reason to be worried about anything.

He enters the shop proper, and they're all waiting for him - Mr. Aizawa with a tired look in his face (his hair is in a braid that keeps it down and he *so happy* that he took Izuku's advice), Mr. Yamada sad eyes, and Hiichan with his fists balled. Before he can help it, he feels a thrill of fear because *oh, another friend ready to attack*- before he cuts it off.

Because Hiichan is his friend, and friends don't hurt each other.

Hiichan is his friend and that's why he gets a very quick, very solid hug, before he's let go and Hiichan is looking at the ground, shoulders hunched.

Izuku watches his face screw up and places a hesitant hand on his shoulder. "Shit," Hiichan mutters, looking away. "Sorry. That was a

lot.”

Izuku gets it. He really, *really* does. He runs his hand from Hiichan’s shoulder down his arm and offers him a smile that Hiichan returns, if shakily.

Mr. Aizawa speaks up. “My question still stands, Midoriya. If you want me to expel him, it’s done.”

Izuku shakes his head immediately. He’s had time to think about this, and he knows that it’s not what he wants.

“No, Mr. Aizawa. I don’t want him expelled.”

Hiichan goes to interrupt, but Izuku shakes his head again, looking at him sincerely.

“I don’t want his dream crushed just because he was mean to me. He doesn’t deserve that. You know what he does deserve, though?” And Izuku can feel something bubbling up, and he lets it tinge his voice. He looks at Mr. Aizawa now. “He deserves therapy. And a chance to be a good person, and a chance to know that what he did to me was *wrong*, and that he can’t do it ever again. He deserves anger management classes, and someone who will push him to change and won’t accept his-his *bullshit*.” Izuku flushes at the curse, but keeps his head up and his back straight.

“Kacchan deserves a chance to change, and the guidance to reach that change. I don’t want him expelled, Mr. Aizawa. I want him to be a hero. An *actual* hero.”

And he looks down, his confidence leaving him with the last word. He swallows because he doesn’t know if it’s fair to ask this of Mr. Aizawa, and he doesn’t know how Hitoshi is going to react, and Mr. Yamada is nice but Izuku knows the hero and he knows that Present Mic always, *always* sticks up for the little guys.

“Well damn,” Mr. Aizawa says. “Yeah. Yeah, alright.”

And Izuku sags against Hiichan a bit in relief, and rests his head on his shoulder. Hiichan wraps an arm around his shoulders, and drags them over to the barstools, sitting them down.

“Okay. So does that mean that I can’t beat him up or make him do the chicken dance on live TV?”

Izuku snorts at the sudden image of Kacchan doing the chicken dance, and can't help the laughter that slips out as the tension in the room breaks.

"Hiichan, as funny as that would be, I don't think it'll help," he says between gasps of laughter.

Hiichan grins and it's an evil thing. "That's fine, I'm sure I'll find something that'll entertain me."

-

Life goes on as usual. Shouto and Hiichan come every day after school - sometimes for a couple minutes, sometimes for a couple hours. Their company is wonderful and calming, and Izuku can tell that Eri likes them both. She spends one day simply commiserating with Shouto about scars, and then the world slips into place like a puzzle piece.

Until it doesn't.

Because Dabi sends him a text late Sunday evening - he's just finished his weekly video call to his mom - and asks for a meeting in the bar. He sends a quick affirmative and spends the rest of his night assuring Eri that he'll be back before morning, and then he's out the window in his regalia and hopping rooftops.

When he gets to the bar, Himiko is making drinks and lining them up, while Dabi scares all the regulars away from the stools. Forgoing his usual booth - which is nicely empty, he notes with a touch of smugness - he slides right into the seat next to Dabi. Himiko slides a bright blue drink to him and looks at him without blinking, which is a touch creepy.

"Try it." It's not phrased like a question and Himiko doesn't sound like she's leaving him room for an out, so he narrows his eyes and takes the tiny cocktail straw to his mask.

"First, why is it blue if we don't have any food coloring back there, second, why is the straw so small, third, how do you know I'm not underage, and fourth, what is it with you people and alcohol?"

Himiko really isn't having it.

"I put stuff in that makes it blue so don't worry about it, the straw is small so it can be annoying, and I'm underage so that argument doesn't hold water, and I want to know what kind of drinks you like .

Try. It.”

Dabi pipes in. “Babe, she worked really hard on it. And it hasn’t been roofied, so, like, double score.”

Izuku sighs, accepting his fate, and slips the straw under his mask to take a sip.

It’s... not bad. It is very sweet, however, and while it’s good, he doesn’t like the idea of getting drunk.

“It’s good, Koko. Nice job.” Himiko grins and wiggles, and Izuku turns to Dabi, setting the drink down in front of him. “What’s up, hotstuff?”

Dabi leans his head back and sighs when his neck pops. “So you remember that text I sent you about how the LoV dudes are gonna beat up the kids?”

Izuku cocks his head to the side and fidgets with his fingers a bit. “Yeah, what about it?”

“Well,” and Dabi leans in, away from prying ears, “I have more. They’re gonna use the press to infiltrate UA. They’re trying to go after the, uh, 1-A class. It’s about All Might or some shit, and I get that, but Shouto’s in that class and I- you... I *can’t*.”

He’s quick about pressing his hand to Dabi’s shoulder, cutting him off before he can spiral. “Hey, don’t worry about it. I’ll make sure Shouto’s safe.” He makes his voice warm. “Thank you, babe. This is really, really good information.”

Dabi deflates, shifting in his seat so that he can lean his head on Izuku’s shoulder. “Coolio, bluebell. You got this.” He pauses. Then, “Oh, shit, yeah, I forgot!” He straightens back out and his eyes are bright as they land on Izuku’s goggles. “You said you wanted to go after Endeavor for realsies, yeah? Well I have some good shit on him that you might be able to use.”

“Do tell,” Izuku hums, grinning easily. If tonight continues as it has, he’ll be well on his way to taking Endeavor down. Dabi pulls out a memory stick and holds it up in front of himself.

“This,” he snarls triumphantly, “is audio recording of baby Shouto’s training sessions, as well as photos and diary entries of the aftermath. It’s also got stuff from Fuyumi and Natsuo and me, from when I was still there.” Dabi lowers the memory stick and his eyes shift to the bar.

"I was gonna send this to the police," he says quietly, and Izuku feels a little flower of anger sprout at the base of his spine. "I *did* send this to the police. A copy of it, at least. And guess what they did?"

"Nothing," Himiko chimes, and she's leaning on the bar and grinning her no-fun grin.

"Nothing," Izuku says, echoing her.

"*Nothing*," Dabi spits. "All that fucked up shit, and they did nothing. Because he's too fucking important, he's got too much fucking money, and who would believe some shitty runaway?" Dabi's shaking, jaw clenched, and the anger wrapping around Izuku like vines gets a touch tighter.

"Nobody likes runaways," Himiko says, tone wistful and eyes dark. "Cept for Birdy here. He likes us. Don't you, Birdy?"

Izuku tips his chin down and makes his voice soft like he does for Eri. "Yeah, I like you guys. I like you guys a lot, actually." He puts one hand on Dabi's stiff shoulder and the other on Himiko's arm. "Being around you guys makes me happy."

Dabi's shoulders loosen just a touch, and Himiko's eyes brighten a bit. "See?" she sings, "I knew it! Birdy likes us, so that means that we have a place! Birdy believes us, and that makes everything a bit more rosy."

Throwing an immensely grateful look at Himiko - that she can't see, of course - Izuku shifts to rest both of his hands on Dabi's forearm. He pulls Dabi's arm up, twisting his own hands so that Dabi's hand is forming a fist and Izuku's hands are wrapped around it. He brings it up and places his chin on it, like he's resting his chin on his own fist, and Dabi snorts.

"Guess what," Izuku says.

"What?"

"If you wanted, you could incinerate me right now."

"Babe." It's deadpan, but it doesn't change the point that Izuku's trying to make.

"I'm serious. All it would take is a little heat, and my head would be gone." Izuku shrugs, relaxing his posture a bit. "I don't think you will, though. You know why?"

“Why?”

Izuku grins. “Because I know you, and you’re not that kind of person. You are, effectively, a good person. You’re... how should I say it? Ah. Yeah.” Izuku lets Dabi’s hand go and wraps his arms around scarred shoulders. “Worthwhile. That’s the word I’m looking for.” Izuku rests his head in the crook of Dabi’s neck and closes his eyes for a second, then pulls back. “Nothing else really matters,” he insists. “Not if you decided to ditch me and work for the LoV, not if you decided to go after Endeavor alone, not if you decided to join a blood cult dedicated to the eradication of truth and love. None of that matters, because *you* are *good*.”

“I will take that memory stick, though, you can’t just wave it in my face and not give it over.”

Izuku smiles, self-satisfied, as Dabi makes a noise that sounds like it’s half laugh and half sob. He slips the memory stick into his shorts, and slides off the stool.

“Miss Toga Himiko,” he says gravely, watching her throw back the drinks she made. “May I borrow your bar for a moment, please?”

Himiko smiles daintily and nods, sweeping her arm out in an as-you-will gesture. “Be my guest, Birdy.”

He climbs onto the bar, and clears his throat, watching the occupants of the tables go quiet and face him. It doesn’t take long.

“Esteemed patrons of the bar,” he begins with a large, sweeping smugness, narrowing his eyes at the faces of the patrons looking up at him. “It has come to my attention that I desire something I can’t quite get by myself. Worry not, though, because I know *exactly* how to get it, and how you all can help me!” He spins once and opens his arms wide, grinning. “What I want is for you to get me information on Endeavor! Everything you can get, my dears, and anyone who brings me something that I don’t already know will get a prize.

“For those of you who aren’t adept at gathering information, I’m calling open season on our fiery... *hero*. I don’t want him dead, of course, but you might go out of your way to *inconvenience* him in any way possible. I’ll be watching, and I’ll be waiting. Best show *also* gets a prize.” He pauses, brings his arms back, and begins pacing slowly across the bartop.

“Now, I know that each and every one of us has been wronged by him

- whether that be him burning down your meth lab or your home as collateral, or the rather unpleasantness that is meeting him up close and personal. It goes to show how *ugly* society can be when it comes to us, the less liked of the bunch.” He reaches the end of the bar and spins on his heel, still pacing. “I just want you all to know that I’ll be making sure that this flaming pile of garbage won’t be troubling us for much longer, and the more you give me the faster it goes. That is all.”

And he steps off the bar, helped down by Dabi, and sits back on his stool.

A throat clears, and he looks at Himiko.

“Birdy,” she says decisively. “That was hot. Do that more.”

Izuku laughs and shakes his head, smiling.

“Your wish is my command, Koko.”

Chapter End Notes

All right! We're getting started on the Kacchan and Endeavor parts of the series! USJ seems to be coming up as well, wonder how that'll go? ;)

I'd like to give a shoutout to everyone in the [discord](#) who didn't yell at me for messing up and helped me out with brainstorming!! Y'all are the bees knees! <3

Next chapter will be out by May 6th!

Chapter 21

Chapter Summary

Izuku gets home and reaps his rewards - some are nice, some not so much. All the same, he's lucky to have everyone he loves with him. :)

Chapter Notes

I,,,,, love these kids

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Izuku gets home early. The first thing he does - the first thing he *always* does - is check on Eri, who's asleep and perfectly fine. The second thing he does is flings himself into his office chair, still in Harbinger regalia, and logs onto his computer. A few keystrokes, a few clicks, and he's looking at the pastel blue screen of his Harbinger email account.

This particular email is, with the help of someone who no longer has to live with an abusive family, completely untraceable and without three verification codes it simply does not show up.

He leans back, still staring at the blue screen, and ponders about how he will protect his friends. Who will he tell? Who will believe him?

Aizawa loves his children, because they are *his*. Nedzu cares about the students as much as he is able, and he has a duty to protect them. All Might is... a hero, no matter what his personal experiences say, and he has a duty of care as a teacher and as the Symbol of Peace. Tsukauchi is the one technically *looking* for the information...

So he begins with Tsukauchi. He drafts an email - it's simple and it's short, and it says that *hey, here's the information on the league of villains that you need, and here's what you should do with it, and here's a list of the other people who are going to know in about two minutes.*

He saves the email as a draft and pulls up a note-taker application, quickly typing up all the important details. They'll be fine, but if they want more they'll have to give him something extra.

He attaches the file and hits send.

One email down.

Then he starts on Nedzu's email. It's longer this time - an introduction seems appropriate here, and Izuku doesn't hesitate with the theatrics. A flourish here, a sly prod there, and he attaches the file and sends it off.

Two emails down.

The third email is for Mr. Aizawa. Really, it's for Eraserhead, but same difference. Like Tsukauchi's email, it's short and sweet, but as he attaches the file he hesitates. He can be nice to Mr. Aizawa, he can give the man a bit more, can't he? Mr. Aizawa is as good as family, and he's been nothing but kind to Izuku for as long as he can remember.

So he adds a P.S.

P.S.: Don't worry about your kids, I'll be watching to make sure that they don't get hurt. Anything for my favorite coffee addict! ;)

And he sends the email.

Three emails down.

Then, it's... All Might's turn. The name sours in Izuku's mouth, but it doesn't really matter because Hiichan and Shouto are at risk and he refuses to let anything bad happen to his friends. Not when he can keep them safe.

So he begins, like Nedzu's email, with an introduction.

I'm Harbinger. You might've heard of me. I deal in information.

And then an appeal to his moral character.

I've recently come upon something I believe you'll find of interest - a young man by the name of Shimura Tenko and a plot to infiltrate UA, to the detriment of your students.

A frown that doesn't quite make it to his eyes flits across Izuku's face. He doesn't want to deal with any replies, least of all the one he knows he's probably going to get from All Might. He respects the actions, yes, but not really the person. Not anymore.

So he continues with the email. A bit about how All Might should make sure to be at the USJ, an urging not to tell anyone, and again,

like Nedzu's email, a heavy dose of implication that this should be allowed to happen, so that they can catch the LoV off guard.

They'll be far easier to drop if they're off balance.

He finishes his email with a flourish, then attaches the notes and sends it off. The memory stick burns a hole in his pocket, but he has to wait until he has every piece of damning evidence he can possibly have.

And so he shuts off his computer, shambles into his room, bleary-eyed, changes into his pyjamas, and crawls into bed.

He's asleep before his head hits the pillows, a small smile on his face and a sliver of relief - of *everything will be fine* - sweetening his dreams.

-

Izuku watches the TV religiously. Specifically the news, and specifically because Endeavor is getting fucked with *constantly*. It's beautiful and he brings his laptop downstairs so he and Eri can watch while minding the shop.

Eri is having a blast. She cheers when one of his people gets a hit in, and she boos when Endeavor does well. It's... not *ideal* for her to be actively rooting for the proverbial villains, but they're both well enough acquainted with Shouto to get away with it.

For those who don't fight, he learns that someone signed up Endeavor to a Scientology mailing list.

Nothing else has really mattered since, and that person is getting whatever she asks for. (It's going to be money, he knows, because her little sister needs to go to college, and he's more than happy to provide.) They have everything. Home address, personal and work phones, emails, even social media accounts. In all his time of knowing Endeavor, Izuku's never seen him this irritated.

Knowing that, however, doesn't come without its concerns.

Mostly concerns for Shouto, because an angry Endeavor is a bad sign for those who have to be around him for literally any amount of time.

It shows itself in the little things. Mostly it's Shouto showing up tired, falling asleep in one of the cushy loveseats with his tea hanging precariously from his hand, or staring blankly at the bookshelf until one of them breaks him out of it.

The bigger things came around less often, but it was worse. Izuku had to move the tea kettles into the back, and he's made sure to keep pillows down in the shop for when Shouto passes out.

And Izuku's gotten... angrier. He looks at Shouto, at the dark under his eyes and the exhaustion on his face and he wants to rage. To abandon his plots and plans and just beat the shit out of Endeavor. He doesn't, he can't afford to, but fuck does he want to.

Instead, he keeps a smile on his face and a pastry in the warmer and some tea in a half-and-half mug; a wire in the phone and a mic in every corner of the café.

Because Izuku has heard the story from Dabi, and he knows what's on the memory stick, and he knows an approximation of everything that has gone on in the Todoroki house since Todoroki Touya left. He's never heard it from Shouto.

"Izuku," a soft voice says, and Hiichan isn't here today because he's staying after at UA for extra combat training and Eri is upstairs, watching Endeavor get fucked up on the big living room TV. "The tea is good."

Izuku feels a smile creep across his face and a pride-blush redden his face. "Thank you, Shouto. I'm glad you like it."

Shouto, sitting in the loveseat across him, nods and looks down at his cup. Izuku's eyes catch on the stray hairs that fall over Shouto's eyes and he can't help but think that Shouto, who is soft-spoken and kind to Eri, looks so incredibly sad in the warm afternoon light of the sun coming through the window.

"Shouto," he says softly, and oh, his eyes are two different colors. It's the first time he's really *noticed* it. Izuku swallows thickly and continues. "I was wondering if... you were okay?"

Izuku watches Shouto's eyes widen, and his heart sinks as he watches all emotion wrench itself free from his face.

"What do you mean." His voice is ice and Izuku struggles not to flinch.

"I..." A pause as he tries to piece together his words, and his hands wrap around his own mug - raspberry and cherry and cream. "You've been tired. You seem stressed. I'm worried and I'd like to help, if I can." Another pause, and he breaks his gaze away from Shouto's. "Is there any way I can help?"

There's quiet, and Izuku can't bring himself to look up. There's the clink of a cup being placed on the table, and Izuku looks up enough to see Shouto fold his hands in his lap.

"You don't like Endeavor."

Izuku shakes his head immediately, and he feels his face involuntarily screw up in disgust. He looks up as a reflex and locks eyes with Shouto, who's looking at him with a curious turn to his lips.

"Endeavor is my father."

It hasn't been explicitly stated before, because Shouto never told Izuku his last name, but Izuku nods all the same.

"And you haven't treated me differently for it."

Izuku's eyebrows furrow and a frown pulls at his lips. "No, that'd be rude. And you're not your father."

Shouto, expressionless, cocks his head a touch to the side. "Even if I have his fire?"

It's the stress, he knows, but Izuku's half out of his chair before he realizes he's moved and he knows that his eyes are fiery because- "It's *not* his fire! It's *yours*! Fuck him!"

Shouto blinks once, slowly, and Izuku plops back down into his chair, cheeks going subatomic and ready to sink into the ground. He feels himself tearing up because what if he just messed up his chance to help Shouto? What if Shouto decides to leave and never come back, and ghost Hiichan because Izuku got too heated talking about Endeavor, who is awful?

And Shouto starts laughing.

The noise is so alien that Izuku has to take a second to process that *yes, Shouto is laughing, and yes, he's smiling, and yes, he looks fine*. Izuku could cry with relief, but he wants to know what Shouto is laughing about.

"You- you really believe that?"

Izuku nods hesitantly, and he's rewarded with a soft, gentle smile that lights up Shouto's face.

"I haven't heard that before. Thank you." Shouto's smile remains for a

few more seconds, but then it falls like water on a window pane and Izuku remembers why they're having this conversation. "Do you know how I got my scar?"

Izuku stays quiet and settles himself down in his seat, waiting for Shouto to continue. Shouto's eyes go blank and he touches his face, his scar, almost absentmindedly.

"I was a kid, and all I wanted was a glass of water..."

-

"I hate him."

"I know. I do too."

"I hate that house."

"You'll always have a place here if you need it. You'd be safe here, I promise."

"Thank you. I'll... think about it."

-

Hitoshi walks into the café and for a second he thinks it's empty, because it's late and Shouto's gone and he can't immediately see Izuku, but there's a movement in the seat facing away from the door. The bell chimes falls into the air and it's heavy, like molasses or syrup, and he's worried.

He shuts the door behind him and makes a slow, cautious path to the chair. He peeks his head around and it's Izuku, sitting there, looking exhausted. He's got tear tracks over his cheeks and a mug of something dark and good-smelling in his hands.

"Hey," he says quietly, because he doesn't quite know how else to start. Izuku looks up and shit, he looks like he's just been to the shelter and told that he's not allowed to pet *any* of the kittens.

"Hiichan," and Izuku's voice is raspy and sad and honestly kinda pathetic and Hitoshi feels really bad for him.

"Hey, Izuku. Do I need to add anyone to my 'beat them up like All Might' list?"

Izuku breathes out a laugh and Hitoshi gangles his way to in front of

Izuku and bends down, sitting back on his haunches. He makes his voice serious and furrows his brows.

“Did To-uh, Shouto say something shitty to you? Because if he did then I’ll make him do the cha-cha slide the next time Dad calls on him in class.”

Izuku laughs again - and it’s real this time, and Hitoshi’s relief makes itself known as a huff.

“No,” Izuku murmurs, looking at his hands. “He didn’t do anything. We had a talk and it was heavy and it made me angry and when I’m angry I usually get sad.”

“What happens when you don’t get sad?”

Izuku looks up with red-rimmed eyes and, utterly serious, says, “Murder.”

Hitoshi takes a second, and he can’t help it - he bursts out laughing.

“Hey! I could murder if I wanted!”

He takes a breath, trying to get control of himself, but he makes the mistake of looking at Izuku and the outrage on his face is just too much - he bursts out laughing again, loses his balance, and falls on his ass.

Hitoshi looks up through his gasps for air and Izuku’s trying, he’s really trying, but he’s started laughing too.

Hitoshi gets ahold of himself and finds himself with an armful of Izuku.

Because Izuku is hugging him.

As in Izuku has wrapped his arms around Hitoshi’s shoulders and his cheek is slotted against Hitoshi’s throat.

Holy *fuck*.

If he weren’t busy hugging Izuku back, he’d be screaming. He’d be screaming really, *really* loud.

“I’m really happy that you’re my friend, Hiichan.”

“Yeah, Izuku, of course. I’m happy you’re my friend too.”

-
“Hey dad?”

“What?”

“How do you feel about me marrying into a café family?”

His dad narrows his eyes and looks over at him.

“You’re not old enough to get married.”

“I know, but how do you *feel* about it?”

A pause.

“I wouldn’t mind.”

“Nice.”

Chapter End Notes

Coming up: the emails are addressed, Kacchan is addressed, and Aizawa is... stressed.

Come tell me how you feel in the [discord](#)!

Next chapter will be out by the 20th!

Chapter 22

Chapter Summary

This is MysticMayhem's fault for giving me an absolutely fucking incredible comment in response to last chapter. Think of this as a bonus chapter, and you'll get the next real chapter as stated in the end notes of 21

Chapter Notes

Tell me why this is the funniest thing I've done in years guys I'm so tired rn it's 2 am also mild relationship spoilers? Idk I'm the one writing it so I don't know if I can spoiler it? Anyways here's the ship for the next installment of the series lmao no relationships in this book, just pining

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Wikihow how to get out of the friendzone

Wikihow how to tell your crush that you like him

Wikihow how to tell if your crush likes boys

Wikihow how to be a good stepdad

Wikihow how to be a good boyfriend

Wikihow how to make good coffee so that your crush thinks you're cool

Wikihow how to interact with children

Animal crossing new horizon fish

Wikihow how to not be awkward

Wikihow how to throw it back

Wikihow how to delete search history

Endeavor fail comp

Meme music playlist

-
Wikihow how to sneak out of my house at night

Wikihow how to skip school

Wikihow how to be a good roommate

Crush definition romantic

Wikihow how to tell if you have a crush

Wikihow what to do if I have more than one crush

Polyamory definition

Wikihow how to find a missing person

Wikihow how to find a missing person without involving the police

Wikihow how to talk to estranged mom

Wikihow how to talk to estranged brother

Endeavor fail compilation

Endeavor rage compilation

Wikihow how to not laugh when my dad makes an ass of himself on national tv

Wikihow how to delete search history

Chapter End Notes

Hey babes I'm going to sleep now but come say hi in the [discord](#)!

Chapter 23

Chapter Summary

Kacchan and also Nedzu and also USJ discussions

Chapter Notes

Hey! if you guys see any typos please don't hesitate to point them out, I'm tired and I might not have caught all of them :)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Contrary to popular belief, Shouta cares about his class. A lot. So much, in fact, that it could be considered a liability, which is why he exaggerates his ire.

Usually, that is.

Because he doesn't have to exaggerate anything for this conversation.

Well. Not conversation. If he gets through this right, it'll be more of a lecture than anything else.

"Bakugou. Stay here, I need to talk to you."

Bakugou Katsuki glowers at him but acquiesces, leaning back against the front row of desks. Kirishima looks between them, then grins and waves to Bakugou.

"See you later, bro!"

Bakugou grunts and keeps his eyes locked on Shouta.

The door shuts and then the classroom is empty.

Shouta withholds a sigh and knows that he needs to get this over with. "Bakugou. Do you know why I asked you to stay behind."

"No clue."

He narrows his eyes a bit. The idea that Bakugou Katsuki - Midoriya's *Kacchan* - hasn't the faintest idea why he might need to be talked to is suspicious, to say the least. It speaks of years of entitlement, but he has to keep his cool.

"I see. I kept you behind to talk about your behaviour. It's unacceptable."

Bakugou bristles and his hands curl into claws. Shouta activates his quirk and stares him down.

"If you want to say something, do it without your quirk."

Bakugou sneers and clenches his fists. "How the hell is my behavior unacceptable?"

Ah. A willingness to listen. Good.

"You constantly insult your classmates. At the quirk demonstration held by All Might, you went way overboard and injured Uraraka past a reasonable measure, even when you were told to stand down. You are obstinate and while a certain amount of disrespect for authority can be healthy, you take it too far. You show narcissistic characteristics, and I looked into your background. Tell me why I should allow a bully to remain in my class?"

Bakugou goes red, then white, and he throws his gaze to the floor. Shouta reads him easily - it's wrath and pride and regret, but not guilt. Unfortunate.

"I'm at an impasse. I wouldn't give a second thought to expelling you. You've got nine years of bullying behind you and it's difficult to justify letting you stay here when you don't show signs of changing that behaviour. On the other hand, someone's vouched for you. They want you to stay here and learn how to be better. So what should I do, Bakugou?"

Bakugou's quiet. His jaw is clenched and Shouta lets his quirk taper off. He watches Bakugou struggle for words, but he's not going to help him out. He needs to figure out how to fix his mistakes without other people paving the way for him.

"Who vouched for me?"

"I'm not going to tell you."

Bakugou glares at him and he stares back, face blank.

"I want to be a hero."

"So? Lots of people want to be heroes. That doesn't mean they have

what it takes. You have potential, Bakugou, but that means nothing without the right mindset. You can want to be a hero all you like.” He feels like he should be getting some vindictive pleasure from this, but he’s not. Midoriya is a child, yeah, but Bakugou is a child too. There’s nothing he gains from this. He just feels disappointed.

“I have what it takes,” Bakugou snarls, and he’s missing the point. “I’m going to be the number one hero!”

“Why? Why are you going to be the number one hero? Do you really think that you have what it takes?”

“Yes, I have what it takes! And I’m going to be the number one hero because I’m the best!”

Shouta shakes his head. “The best according to who?”

Bakugou opens his mouth, then shuts it with a click.

“See? Right now, you’re not a hero. By all accounts, you’re a bully. I know at least three people who’d call you a villain. Do you want to be a villain, Bakugou? Because that’s where you’re heading.” He sighs, leaning back. He promised Midoriya he’d try. “I’m signing you up for therapy with Hound Dog. Unless you want to be expelled, it’s mandatory. I’ll write a note for your parents, and it’ll take the place of Practical Heroics until I can see that your behaviour has improved. Do you understand?”

Fuming, Bakugou nods. He stays silent, a blessing, and Shouta nods in return.

“This is an opportunity, and it’s your *only* chance. Work on yourself. You can’t go through life believing that everyone is below you, or you’ll die - *especially* if you make it through the hero course. If I don’t see improvements in a month, you’re out. Dismissed.”

He watches as Bakugou stiffly makes his way out, jaw clenched, just barely not slamming the door behind him. He takes a deep breath and lets it out slowly, closing his eyes and counting to ten.

“Well fuck,” he murmurs. He rests his head on his desk and wishes for coffee. “That went well.”

-

Nedzu looks at his computer.

He doesn't frown, because that's far too human a thing to do. He does smile, though, which is a habit he's picked up from everyone around him. It's one of the few human habits he doesn't mind - like drinking tea, and taking pleasure in the suffering of others.

Smiling fits somewhere in with those.

He looks at his computer and smiles and he is filled with curiosity.

Because, of all the things in the world a single email could be, this one's childish.

It's an introduction, first and foremost. A welcome - a *foothold* - into the world of Harbinger, a new informant. A *good* informant - an endless well of odds and ends, smart enough to cover his face and charismatic enough to make friends on both sides. If Nedzu weren't so entrenched in the world of heroes, he'd most likely have taken up a similar mantle.

But still.

It's not childish in the way of a toddler, or the way most of his students are childish. It's the type of childish that makes him feel like Harbinger is someone who has not lost his love of life. Which, by all accounts, is interesting - he certainly has enough disgust in the world to dive into the underbelly.

So he looks at his computer. And presses the intercom button.

"Could Eraserhead and All Might please meet me in my office?"

-

It's easy to set up a meeting between everyone who got an email. In the end, it's him, Nedzu, Tsukauchi, and All Might - fucking *All Might*, Harbinger what the hell?

Shouta swallows a sneer and, with a heavy heart, suggests a restaurant near the school because bringing All Might to Midoriya's café isn't a good idea. He has to stay strong, no matter how much he wants coffee.

"So, just to get this all straight," Tsukauchi starts, laying his hands on the table. "We were all emailed by Harbinger," a round of nods, "about the League of Villains," another round of nods, "and about how they'll attack the USJ?"

“Yes,” squeaks Nedzu. “Mine was... particularly exuberant. It was an introduction letter, really. If my memory serves me correctly, he called me a ‘care-bear but without the morals’. It was odd, if pleasant.”

Shouta narrows his eyes at Nedzu. If there’s a list of things he doesn’t want happening, Nedzu being introduced to Harbinger falls just under Harbinger being around Midoriya and Eri.

“I see. Now, I have to ask a very important question before we continue.”

Everyone looks at Naomasa.

“Are you going to want to investigate Harbinger, how he got your emails, or how he came across this information?”

Shouta watches All Might twitch. He also watches All Might shake his head. Suspicious. He shakes his head as well. There’s no point - he doesn’t think that Harbinger would like being investigated, and he can’t afford to get into his bad graces. Nedzu shakes his head as well, a small smile on his face.

“No,” says Nedzu. “I’m more concerned with what we’re going to do with the information.”

Tsukauchi nods. “All right. Since I’m off duty and UA is a private entity, I won’t take this to the police if you don’t want me to, but I think that a collaboration between us would be beneficial if the League of Villains *does* attack the USJ. What do you think?”

Nedzu hums. “I pride myself on being prepared for anything that might take place on school grounds. If you think that involving the police would be beneficial, I am loathe to stop you. However, I do ask that you keep it as quiet as possible. We don’t know if there are any moles, in UA or in the justice system. Any indication that we know what might be coming could very well turn things for the worse.”

Shouta grunts, face slipping into a scowl.. “So you’re saying we should go through with the USJ field trip? Use the kids as bait?”

“That will be your call,” says Nedzu. “They’re your students. If you think they can handle it, then we’ll continue with the field trip as is. If you think it’s a bad idea, we’ll find something else.”

Tsukauchi raises his hand, like a student and Aizawa snorts, rolling his

eyes. Tsukauchi throws a bland look his way and rolls his eyes back. "If I may, I have a proposal?"

Nedzu nods.

"What if you send the kids on a field trip, but not to the USJ? Pick another section of the school so it'll look like they're going, and then send heroes to the USJ to catch the League. If it works, then good for us, if it doesn't then none of the kids get hurt. It also works with how Harbinger said to 'let it happen', so bonus points there." Well, he's not wrong.

"Detective, are you implying that you also think there might be a mole?" There's a glint in Nedzu's eye that discomforts Shouta.

"Not necessarily, but I'm not going to discount the idea. The safety of the kids comes first, either way."

Shouta considers it. It's not a bad idea, even if he thinks that there's no way a mole would be in UA. Even the more suspicious staff are just too invested in the students to help villains hurt them, and all the students are thoroughly vetted. "Sounds solid. I don't want the kids at the USJ if they're just going to get attacked. I'll tell them they're going on a field trip like I was planning, it'll be easy to switch up the location the day of." He looks at Nedzu. "Agreed?"

"That sounds like a plan. Gentlemen?"

A round of nods - All Might has been quiet, but that might just be a blessing in disguise. He puts it out of his mind as they get up to leave, because he wants coffee.

"Later," he says to Tsukauchi, who gives him a thumbs up, and then he's walking down the street, mapping in his head the fastest way to get caffeine.

-

"Naomasa!"

He turns around and sees Toshinori walking quickly towards him, hand raised. He nods, smiling. "Hey, Toshinori. I didn't get a chance to ask in there; how are you?"

Toshinori grins and shakes his head. "Ah, I'm fine. That was some meeting, though."

Naomasa smiles. "It certainly was something. I think that if I could, I'd like to pick Harbinger's brain for an hour or two. It'd definitely be interesting."

"I was wondering about that actually," Toshinori says quietly. Naomasa pauses and looks at his friend. Toshi is thin, has been for a while now, but he's looking unusually gaunt today.

"Yes?"

"I was... thinking about the past, and I have to ask. Do you think that All for One is truly dead?"

The question catches him completely off guard. He blinks and pales, realizing that he's kept Toshinori completely out of the loop. "Oh. We need to talk about that, actually. I've just realized that I have information you need to see. If you have time later, could we meet up? I know a place that's a little farther away from the regular shops, and the owner won't eavesdrop. Is that okay?"

Toshinori hesitates. Then, "Yes, that sounds fine. I need to be getting home soon, but text me the address and time, would you?"

"Of course. Bye, Toshinori." And he parts with Toshinori, trying to figure out how to tell his friend that All for One is back, and most likely worse than ever.

It's going to be a long conversation.

Chapter End Notes

Everyone, sitting down at a table in a dark room: so what should we do about USJ?

Harbinger, eyes all glowy and shit, poking his head in: how about what I fucking told you to do??

Come say hi in the [discord](#)!

Anyways here's the chap, next one will be out by June 6th!

Edit 6.12.20: hey gucci gang, my dudes and bros, you who are dearest to my heart!! I just moved! I'm taking a touch of time to unpack and get used to this new space I'm occupying, so the update is gonna be late. I'm sorry, but I promise you'll get the next chapter sometime this month. Thank you so much for your patience and understanding, and well wishes in this unsteady

time. Love you guys!! 🤍🤍😊😊

Chapter 24

Chapter Summary

Michael in the Bathroom voice: Now I'm just... Yagi in the café, Yagi in the café and I'm stoopid

ft. Eri, Dabi, and my undying love of Kurogiri

Chapter Notes

brought to you by the letter f

WARNING: in-dream child death, if you wanna skip it just don't read the italics bit

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Izuku doesn't usually have nightmares.

They're an oddity now, a blip in the status quo, 'cause he kind of stopped having them when elementary school ended. About the time he realized that a nightmare was what waited for him at school, and his brain figured out that sleep is for *sleep*, not moving shadows and colorful, gory explosions.

So Izuku doesn't usually have nightmares.

It's probably why he's so... off right now. He knows he's drifting, he *knows* that Eri has noticed, because she gave him an extra-long wake up hug, but he can't *do* anything about it.

Because he's still stuck there.

Eri is older. Maybe his age, wearing a smile and a school uniform. She's leaning against the railing of the roof, far too close to the edge.

"You know you're nothing, right?"

He looks at her and doesn't understand. She should get away from the edge. The railing is old, rickety. It might not hold.

"You're a Deku. You had to kill people to get me." Older Eri tilts her head to the side. "Is that why I'm here? So you can possess me like Father did? Am I a commodity, is that it?"

He flinches back. It's like trying to move through sludge. He opens his mouth to deny her claims, because she's not an object, he can't possess her, he doesn't want to-

"Or do you just keep me around because it makes you feel better?" Older Eri smiles wider, and her teeth are sharp. "Deku, wonderful and peerless, saves the little girl from the big bad wolf. What a good kid. You made your hands all dirty, and you still think you can pat my head?" Her smile drops and she clicks her tongue in disgust. She leans more on the rails, and they creak under her weight. "What would Inko think? What about Hisashi? Aizawa, Yamada, Hiichan, Shoucchan, what about them?"

Every word feels like a papercut against his face. Still, she needs to get away from the railing. He struggles to get to her — it's difficult, like walking with weights. Like having hands pull him back.

"What about Kacchan? Bet he'd be impressed. You couldn't be the hero, so you had to be the villain. Bet he'd love to take you down. That's what you are, though." She blinks, leans back more, and looks at her nails. "You're the villain. Kidnapped the princess, lied to the heroes, all tricks and smiles, and that call to Inko? That was genius. I was almost impressed."

The railing, it's creaking, and he's almost to her, he's almost there, he's got to get her away from the railing-

"Pity." She looks up at him, and she almost looks interested. "What, are you going to jump? You're awfully dedicated to getting to the edge of this roof, Papa. You gonna say hi to everyone down there? Bet if you split your head open it'll be the realest smile they ever get from you." She giggles, leans farther back, and

the

railing

breaks.

The sludge is gone, he can move freely, and she's falling back, and her eyes go from cruel to wide and suddenly it's not the strange, older Eri, but the little girl in the dirty nightgown with bandages up her arms, and she's falling off the roof-

"Papa!" she cries, terrified, and she reaches out a hand as she falls and he reaches out a hand in return and he's too late and he's grabbing onto the side of the roof, half over it himself, looking down at a butterfly pinned to the sidewalk.

Dead. Crumpled. In a few places, torn.

Kacchan's down there. Looking at her.

So is Dabi.

So is Hitoshi.

And Shouto.

And Aizawa. And Yamada. And Mom, and Dad, and Himiko, and his classmates, and everyone he's ever seen on the streets and in the bar and on TV and they're all looking at Eri, doing nothing.

In unison, they look up at him.

Izuku wakes up confused and terrified.

Because none of that dream made sense. Eri's not in middle school, she doesn't think he's a villain, she doesn't *hate* him, and she's *certainly* not *dead*.

Fuck that.

And yet he can't seem to get it out of his head. Because... he did kidnap her. He's lying to everyone he meets about her, and he's doing it *well*.

He's faking it. All of it.

And he doesn't like that thought.

It reminds him of middle school. Getting through the days with nothing but a shaky smile and a new starburst on his arm, a burnt notebook and no pocket change.

Because he faked it. Tried to be likable, tried to make real smiles, tried to be true to himself, and it was all... nothing worked.

And he knows that it's... not his fault. He didn't intend to be born like this, he didn't intend to be quirkless and-

Well.

There are a few habits he's trying to break. For Eri, if not for himself.

The bell at the door chimes.

-

Naomasa ushers Toshinori into the café, listening to the soft chime of the bell above the door.

“One moment,” comes a familiar voice from the back.

Toshinori looks around and Nao walks them over to the chess table in front of the window.

“Here,” he says, pulling out a chair for his friend. “Sit.”

Toshinori obliges with a stilted smile, and rests his hands on the table. “You... said this place was safe? For the conversation we’re going to have?”

Naomasa nods. “Safer place than most. It’ll just be us, and Midoriya won’t eavesdrop.”

Toshinori nods as Midoriya steps out of the back room, a distant smile on his face.

“Hello, Mr. Tsu-tsukauchi. An-and Mr. Tsukauchi’s friend. What-what can I get y-you?”

Nao turns in his seat and quirks a smile at the kid. “Midoriya, nice to see you. This is my friend, Yagi Toshinori. What do we want? Surprise me. But probably something light for my friend here, if you can work that out?”

Midoriya’s smile brightens and he nods. “That’ll wo-work just fine!” He smiles at the both of them and makes his way back into the back room.

Naomasa turns back to Toshinori, smiling. “That’s Midoriya. Eri, his kid, is probably around here somewhere too.”

Toshinori chokes, eyes widening. “He has a child? He’s a child himself!”

Snickering, Nao shakes his head. “She’s his cousin, he’s taking care of her. She’s essentially his kid either way, though. From what I’ve seen, those two are attached at the hip. Good kids.”

“I see.” Toshinori nods. “And his parents? Are they here as well?”

“They live in America. This shop is his.”

He probably enjoys it too much when Toshinori chokes again, swallow face aghast and blue eyes wide.

“They’re what!?”

Naomasa laughs, grinning. “Living in America. Midoriya runs the shop, raises Eri, and probably does a lot more. He’s a strange kid, but he’s a good one.” His grin falls into something smaller, something a bit more mischievous. “Makes damn good coffee, too. Maybe enough to get your coworkers to like you? I’ve heard that coffee works wonders on adults who have to work with you- ah, sorry, I mean kids.”

Toshinori gives him a withering look and Nao smothers his smile.

“I’ll take that into consideration.” Toshinori looks around. “How’d you find this place, anyways?”

“Eraserhead.”

A pause.

“Today really doesn’t seem to be your day, does it?”

The shake of a head, and Toshinori sends him a rueful smile. “No, it doesn’t.”

The door to the back room swishes open, and Midoriya comes out with a tray.

“Alri-right,” he says, smiling at them. “Mr. Tsukauchi, I ma-made you a blackberry mocha with blackberry linzer cookies,” Midoriya sets down a mug and a plate in front of him and he has to actively keep himself from drooling. He’s only been here a few times but damn if Midoriya doesn’t outdo himself every visit.

“And gr-green tea for Mr. Ya-yagi, along with some lavender shortbread cookies.” He sets the teacup and plate down in front of Toshinori, and Naomasa knows that he’s stealing some of those cookies.

“Do y-you guys need anythi-thing else?” Midoriya tilts his head to the side and his hair. It floofs with the movement.

“No,” Naomasa says. “Thank you, Midoriya.”

A quick grin, a nod, and then Midoriya’s off again, and they’re alone

in the café proper. Nao turns to Toshinori and quick as a dart, before even trying any of his own food, snatches up one of the lavender cookies, popping it in his mouth.

“Dammit,” he swears softly. He shakes his head, and looks up at Toshinori. “He’s too good.”

Toshinori sends him a look and takes a sip of his drink. Then takes another sip. And eats a cookie.

“I... have to agree, actually. Is that his quirk? Making his food taste this good?”

Nao shakes his head. “Nope. Doesn’t matter, either way.” He takes a sip of his coffee and *does not* tear up. Because that’d ruin his reputation, never mind the fact that nobody but Toshinori’s here to see him, or the fact that his reputation puts him at ‘respectable’, not ‘emotionless’. “Alright. I owe you answers, right?”

The air changes. Gets a touch heavier, and he sees Toshinori swallow.

“You don’t owe me anything, but I’d appreciate them none the less.” His voice goes low. “You said... you said that All for One isn’t dead?”

Nao looks down, studies the table. Looks back up at his friend.

“You understand that unless you get cleared for it, you can’t act on any of the information I’m about to give you, yes?” Toshinori nods solemnly. “Okay. The truth is, we don’t know for sure. But our informant believes that the chances of him being alive? And running his tricks again? They’re *high*, Toshi. I know you fought him, after he killed Nana. I know he injured you, that your time as All Might has been drastically reduced. That if there’s anything fair and just in the world, he should be dead.”

Toshinori is pale as a ghost, and Naomasa loathes seeing his friend like this.

“The truth is... All for One is probably still alive. And he’s more dangerous than ever.”

-

Eri’s favorite person is Papa.

Out of all the people she knows — and she knows a *lot* of people, like

Mr. Aizawa and Mr. Yamada and Hiichan and Shoucchan and the detective — he's the best. He's the greenest and the most like sunshine and his smiles send butterflies up her chest.

And of all the things she'd hate most in the world, right after going back to Father (which can't happen because Papa promised it wouldn't and Papa doesn't make bad promises), the idea that someone would hurt Papa makes her tear up and clench her fists so tight she gets crescents in her palms.

And she's clenching her fists because she knows, *she knows* that the man who just came in the door with Mr. Tsukauchi has hurt Papa before. Even though Papa doesn't seem to see it like she does, even though he's been distracted all morning.

It's the thin man's smile.

Because she remembers it, because it's *not* like Papa's smile, because Mr. Yagi has the same eyes that looked at Papa, at *her Papa*, and told him that he couldn't be a hero just because he wasn't born like everyone else was.

Mr. Yagi looks like All Might. Mr. Yagi *is* All Might — even though she hasn't sifted through how that would be possible yet — and Eri wants him *out*.

She's sitting behind the counter, tucked into the dark space just underneath the register because it's a fun place to fit herself into, and she's listening. Listening for something mean, or something loud, or something that doesn't belong so she can make Mr. Yagi leave.

Mr. Tsukauchi can stay, but he's walking on thin ice.

(That's a phrase she learned from Papa, because she heard it on the TV and he explained it to her. She's glad she has a chance to use it in real life, even if it's in such an awful situation.)

But Papa doesn't seem to notice. He's been drifty since this morning — he woke up just fine, but he was quiet where usually he's loud, tired where usually he's bright, and there was something just a little bit off about how he combed her hair.

She hopes he's not getting sick. It's still cold outside, even if it is getting warmer.

Mr. Yagi's voice lowers suddenly, so she closes her eyes and cricks her

head to the side, straining to listen.

“-and I don’t know how much longer I can hold off the transfer. I think...” She leans forward; it’s almost a whisper now, and she loses a few words. “... Mirai’s choice, and he deserves a chance, at least, right?”

Eri leans back and huffs, crossing her arms. Mr. Yagi better leave soon.

-

Mr. Tsukauchi and Yagi Toshinori leave Izuku’s café with little fanfare. Eri breathes easier, and Izuku sits on the floor in the back room, phone on the ground next to him.

He runs his hands over his face, carefully breathing in, out, in again, out again. He won’t lose his cool. Not here, not now.

He picks up his phone and archives the audio file, moving it to the file he keeps all his ‘definite enemy’ information in.

He clicks out of the app and over to messages. Takes another breath.

In. Out.

In.

Out.

-

Darling Dearest

Can you come by the bar 2night

Please

#GetShiggyChapstick2k20

Yeah babe what’s up

Is something wrong??

Harbinger is something wrong

Text back please

Darling Dearest

It's not that important I just

Just come by tonight please

#GetShiggyChapstick2k20

I'll be there

Dabi looks up from his phone and waves his hand at Shigaraki, who's sitting at the bar with his Switch in his hands, scowling. Shigaraki looks up, eyes flashing, and Dabi finger-guns at him.

"I'm going out tonight. Don't expect me back before dawn."

Shigaraki rolls his eyes and goes back to his game. "Whatever. I don't care, just don't get killed or something stupid like that."

Dabi blinks. Then grins. "Are you? Expressing interest in my well-being? Kuro, are you getting this?" He grins at Kurogiri, who's behind the bar polishing glasses, and lifts his phone up, waving it in the air.. "Quick, we gotta record it!" He snickers and sits up, dodging a glass that does little more than bounce off the couch cushion.

"Careful there, sandpaper. Wouldn't want to mess up my beautiful face."

Shigaraki snorts and makes a shooing motion, eyes still locked on his game. "Go away."

Dabi stands from the couch and sweeps into a low bow, still grinning. "Your wish is my command, my liege."

"Kurogiri, make him leave. He's distracting and rude."

Kurogiri looks at Shigaraki consideringly, then at Dabi, who's nodding excitedly.

Do it, he mouths.

Kurogiri sighs, turns to Shigaraki, and gives a shallow bow. "Your wish is my command, my liege."

Dabi laughs maniacally, stepping through the portal just as Shigaraki whips his head up, mouth open and eyes alight with betrayal.

Worth it.

Chapter End Notes

Oh? What's that? All Might didn't recognize the quirkless kid whose dreams he crushed? Color me surprised.

(can you. can you taste the sarcasm?)

Yell at me in the [discord](#)!

Next chapter will be out by July 15th!

Chapter 25

Chapter Summary

Izuku: Hi im Harbinger and these are the boys
Hawks in the back, pointing at Himiko: is that girl a boy too?
Izuku, as Himiko throws up double middle fingers: yes

OR

after All Might leaves, Izuku wants to vent and be around his bar buds

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Dabi steps into the bar just as the sun is going down and he settles in for a wait. Harbinger usually doesn't show up until the twos and threes of the morning, which must suck for his sleep schedule. Dabi gets to sleep on the couch whenever he wants.

He passes most of the time sitting and chatting with Himiko, comparing family stories and brainstorming ways to make Harbinger's life easier.

"Kill all his enemies!"

"Set up a spy network."

"Stalk him and make sure he's always safe!"

"That's an invasion of privacy. Bring him more people to save."

"Drink his blood and pretend to be him so that people think he's all-powerful!"

"That's... that's also an invasion of privacy. Stop being horny on main, Koko. Get him a significant other."

"Be his significant other!"

They both pause.

"Nah."

“No, you’re right, that wasn’t my best idea. Hmm. Get him a kitty! He likes kitties, right?”

“Yeah, he likes cats. Bring him Endeavor’s head on a pike.”

“Make thorn be nice to him!”

“Put him in charge of the world.”

“Ooh, good one, I’ll write that down!”

A man steps up to the bar and sits next to Dabi, wings rustling. “How about help him gut the Hero Commission?”

Dabi blinks.

And turns his head.

And looks at Hawks, the No. 3 hero.

And says, “I’m listening.”

-

They’ve moved topics by the time Harbinger shows up, but it doesn’t matter because Himiko recorded it for later and their attention spans are short anyway.

And Harbinger, covered though he is, looks like shit. Dabi gets up and walks over to the window, wrapping an arm around his friend’s shoulders. He immediately sags into Dabi’s side, resting his head against Dabi’s chest and sighing quietly.

“Hey, babe. What’s up?”

Harbinger shakes his head and lets Dabi lead him to the bar stools. Dabi sets himself onto a stool, and lifts Harbinger up onto the counter. Harbinger leans forward until his arms are wrapped loosely around Dabi, with his cheek resting on Dabi’s shoulder.

“I’m...angry and tired. Today has been a Day.”

Oh. Huh.

“What are you angry and tired for?”

“I’m angry because I just learned most of my life is a lie, and because

the information that lead to that discovery would literally fuck *everything* up. And I'm angry because I can't talk about it, or else the public would crumple in on itself and that'd suck in a major way. It's like walking a tightrope without a net — one slip-up and that's it." Dabi reaches up and rubs warm circles into Harbinger's back. Himiko is on the other end of the bar, giving them privacy until he signals her to come over. "I'm tired because I had a nightmare about my... ward? Kid cousin? My kid. And it sucked."

Uh. Well. Harbinger is a dad. That... that is both surprising and not. But it's information, *personal* information that Dabi's being trusted with, so he'll act natural and not like he's about to burst into flames at the honor. So he nods. "I feel you about living a lie," he murmurs, leaning his head so it rests against Harbinger's. "I was just barely allowed to go to school with other kids, and it was always, 'Oh, you're Endeavor's kid! That must be so cool, you're so lucky!' And I couldn't tell them anything or he'd kill me. So I pretended like everything was awesome, like I was the proudest son the world had ever seen."

"But I get to do something about it. You're helping me do something about it. And it'll fuck the public up, but it's the right thing to do. I don't know what the right thing to do is for your stuff, but that's not my place to decide. We trust you, babe." With his words, and his hands rubbing Harbinger's back, and his head resting on Harbinger's head, something clicks and eases. Harbinger loses the tension in his shoulders, and sinks like jelly from the bartop onto Dabi's lap.

He signals Koko over with a glance and a wave of his hand, and drums his fingers against Harbinger's back. "And I don't know what would light shit up more than removing Endeavor from this place of existence, but I know quite a bit about nightmares and I give pretty baller advice. Tell me your troubles, weary traveler," he croons, and Harbinger snorts. Dabi grins. *Hell yeah, one point for Dabi.*

Himiko bounces over to them and shoves something bright orange at Dabi. He takes a sip and considers it. Not bad.

"I read a lot of dream-interpretation books when I was in middle school!" She's bright eyed and bushy tailed for being awake this early in the morning, but she's probably nocturnal anyways so he doesn't dwell on it. She continues. "I went through a fortune-telling-based witchcraft phase and I had a lot of dreams about blood, so I kinda went all out. Not to, like, brag or anything." She waves a hand in the air and grins at him. He wiggles his eyebrows at her. Harbinger lifts his head and shifts around, turning to so he's sitting across his lap

with his left arm slung around Dabi's shoulders.

"Koko," Harbinger says, voice bright and incredulous, "I didn't know that! That sounds really awesome, actually."

Himiko preens, blushing and smiling so hard her fangs glint in the low light of the bar. "Yup! Birdy, you should know that I'm *dangerously* competent." Her eyes flash, and for a moment her face is more bloodlust than pride. "I'm really good at knifing people. In case you ever... need those kinda skills, I'm right here and I don't ask a lot of questions." Her smile pulls back into something more appropriate for people and Dabi feels a little bloom of affection. Camaraderie in the face of Harbinger's troubles, be they human or otherwise. He's proud to call her his friend.

Harbinger makes a soft noise of thanks and reaches out to brush Himiko's hand with his own.

Himiko, wonder that she is, doesn't need words. She rolls her eyes. "Any time, Birdy."

-

"So with the butterfly thing, everything else ties together?"

"Exactly! I gotta say, Birdy, that's a lot of stress for such a little body."

"I'm so much taller than you."

"I know you're wearing heel lifts, and you're still small. Baby's, like, three inches taller than you."

"Were it not for the laws of this land I'd've slaughtered you."

-

Himiko watches Birdy and Baby leave the bar, and it's almost-morning outside. There's still a bit more dark before the sun comes up, and they're going out to make paperwork for Birdy's detective friend. Himiko stays in the bar, because that's what Birdy asked her to do when they first became friends, and sips on a drink as she cleans up.

Everybody's gone now, because it's closing time for the strip club under her feet. That means it's closing time for Birdy's bar, and that means all the rough-and-tumbles and all the not-quite-heroes go home to rest before coming back into Birdy-and-Baby-and-hers space. It also

means she gets to get rid of all the leave-behinds, like cash on tables and beer stains. She mourns over the loss of taste — why can't Birdy's patrons ask her to make something more adventurous? Beer is fine but they could be less boring.

Himiko *hates* boring.

It's probably why she made friends with Birdy so easy-quick. He's not boring. He also didn't scream when she flicked her knife at him, and he didn't kick her out when she asked to use the mini-fridge in the back for her vials of blood.

He got her a mini-fridge specifically *for* her vials of blood. And a label-maker.

She's never had a friend like Birdy before. There's a red, snarling part of her that says she'll never have a friend-like-Birdy again, so she needs to make sure he stays. Make sure none of the rough-and-tumbles and the not-quite-heroes ever touch him.

She finishes wiping down the tables and settles into her room-in-the-back for the nightly knife-sharpening. It's gone from taking-a-long-time, when she was new-to-knives and small, to quick-and-easy, when she was scared-and-alone and not-small, and back again to taking-a-long-time — but now it's not that she's inexperienced, it's that she has a space to work.

She has a-space-and-a-time, and more knives, and no worry that her mom will come home all booze-flushed and terror-eyed and loud. She can take her time, devote all her attention to her task, to the knives in her hand and the whetstone and the mineral oil and the glide of a blade as it sharpens-cuts-through-air. She can buy as many knives as she wants, gets them as friends-give-gifts-Koko, can sleep in her room-in-the-back with three of them tucked under the pillow if she wants. It's all Birdy's fault, too, she thinks. She smiles.

All Birdy's fault, and she's never been this happy-satisfied-loved.

Chapter End Notes

So. Next chapter is a UA chapter. It's not the USJ chapter, but it's a UA chapter.

Come say hi in the [discord](#)! Tell me how I did and what you'd like to see in the future!!

Next chapter will be up by the 29th!

Chapter 26

Chapter Summary

A non-USJ UA chapter. Love these kids

Chapter Notes

Anyways this is my love letter to the kids of 1-A

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Mina isn't the smartest girl in the room, ever. She knows that, she gets it, it doesn't bother her anymore. She has her little bro, Eiji, and her new buds, Kami and Sero, and they make sure she doesn't feel dumb.

Well. That she doesn't feel dumb school-wise. There's never any harm in being kinda stupid.

But either way, even if she isn't *smart* smart, she's still got skills. Like gossiping, and snooping, and being weirdly observational. She's gotta know what's up, or else her title as Gossip Queen could be in danger.

So sometimes are some things she just *sees*.

Like how Shinsou and Todoroki are always alone together. It took Kami's "this is obvious so I don't think about sharing it" way of talking for her to see it in a way that made sense, but once she saw it she couldn't unsee it.

Shinsou and Todoroki are always alone together.

She can count on one hand the times she's seen them talk to each other. If anything, Todoroki talks to Yaoyorozu (rich kids, duh), and Shinsou talks to Iida (there is?? a story behind that?? she will get that story if it *kills* her), and they almost never interact.

But when they're not talking to anyone else, or doing anything else, they're always near each other. And she *sees* Shinsou's mouth move, and she *sees* Todoroki nodding.

Now she's gonna *know* what they're talking about.

She's good at moving around. She takes her dance classes as gospel, and that means she can maneuver herself in many, *many* ways.

Usually, she's setting up pranks. Now, she's following the two cold-and-mysterious kids (because dark-and-mysterious is a Tokoyami exclusive) outside, behind the main building after school.

Now, from what she's seen in life, this is either a confession or a fight. She's equally excited for either option.

She kinda hopes it's both. They'll fight, and then they'll realize their feelings, and then they'll make out and get together, and she will know exactly what went down.

Except when she gets close enough to hear, they're not fighting. Or confessing.

She thinks. They're being *really* vague.

She gets comfortable in her spot around a corner, in the late afternoon shadows of the building. She cocks her head, closes her eyes, and focuses.

She catches the tail end of Shinsou's sentence first.

"... and I want to know if you'll help me make sure it doesn't happen again."

Woah, he sounds serious, Mina thinks, and shuffles a bit closer. Todoroki's taking now.

"There are very few things I wouldn't do to ensure the safety of that person. If you need help, I will help you."

Mina raises her eyebrows and lets out a slow, silent breath. This is like one of her animes, and Shinsou and Todoroki are the sworn protectors of the main character! Oh, she's super excited. Kami won't *believe* this.

"Thanks. I know how you feel. He's...."

"Yeah. He is."

It clicks. *They're confessing to each other! About a person they both like!* Mina squeezes her lips together, and chants 'don't squeal don't squeal don't squeal don't squeal' to herself. *I have to meet this person*, she decides. *I have to know who got to them. I must.*

Todoroki speaks up again. "I... wanted to ask you something."

Mina's breathing stutters.

“What’s up?”

She laces her fingers together and squeezes, opening her eyes and focusing on a dirt speck on the ground. *Fucking focus, Mina. Listen. Remember. Holy shit.*

“I need to know...”

She’s going to *scream*. Quietly. Into her pillow, when she gets home.

“... if you...”

He’s gonna do it. He’s gonna ask if Shinsou also likes this person, and Shinsou will say ‘yes’ and they’ll fight for the right to date them!

“... are Aizawa’s secret love child.”

...

“ ... ”

She’s going to beat him up.

She’s going to beat up Todoroki Shouto and it won’t be her fault, because he started it and yeah, that’s not fair to him, but *fuck*, dude, why now?

Of all the times to learn that you’re a conspiracy theorist, she wails in her head, a single tear rolling down her cheek. *I... can’t listen to this anymore. Farewell, juicy gossip. You died before your time, but I’ll remember you.*

She gets up, shakes out her legs to get the feeling back into them, and gets out of that hellscape.

“This is fine,” she says quietly to herself. “There will always be drama. I’ve just got a wait for it.” She clenches her fist and grins. “I can do it! Find the gossip! Plus Ultra!”

She sets off for the front gate, where her bros are waiting for her to catch up.

-

“Is she gone?”

“Yes.”

“Nice. By the way, yes.”

“Excuse me?”

“I’m not a secret, and we’re not biologically related, but yeah.”

“ ... ”

“Keep it on the downlow, though. I’m *not* a secret, but until I can protect myself fully we’re not broadcasting it. Okay?”

“Okay.”

“Cool. Wanna go say hi to Izu?”

“Yes.”

“Alright. Lemme get my stuff.”

“Hitoshi.”

“Yeah?”

“When you say broadcasting...”

“Save it for Izu’s.”

-

Ochako likes to think that she’s approachable. After all, if she wasn’t approachable, Tsu wouldn’t have come up to talk to her.

She really wants to use that approachability to befriend someone now, because the only person Iida seems comfortable talking to is Shinsou, who doesn’t look like he’s comfortable talking to *anyone*. Except maybe Todoroki, but Todoroki usually sticks to himself or to Yaoyorozu, who looks like she’s dead set on cozying up to Jirou. Jirou seems cool with that, and she usually talks to Yaoyorozu or Kaminari, who’s pretty set with Ashido and Sero and Kirishima.

Kirishima likes Bakugou. She doesn’t know what’s happening there. And that’s fine, because Ochako gets it, and Bakugou has seriously calmed down from what he was like earlier in the year (thank goodness), so she wishes them well.

Bakugou still hates everybody, though.

Anyways, she wants to befriend Iida. She just has to talk to him.

Which is difficult. Because yeah, she's kinda good at talking to people, but she's nothing like Ashido, and she's *definitely* nothing like Yaoyorozu. Who Iida already kind of knows. But at the same time, Yaoyorozu is, like, *really* set on Jirou, so she wants to give Iida someone to talk to. And he seems fun, in his own way.

"Talk to him or don't talk to him, 'Chako,'" says Tsu, eating her lunch. "Best case is he'll like the conversation, worst case is he won't ignore you, cause that'd be rude, and he doesn't like the conversation, kero."

Ochako slumps down on the table, biting her lip. "But what if I say something super rude without realizing it? We come from totally different worlds, Tsu. I don't want to offend him."

Tsu blinks slowly, turns to her, and pokes her cheek.

"Then stick to things you have in common. School, mostly. Talk to him about school." Tsu turns her gaze to where Iida is sitting, alone. Ochako's eyes follow hers, and she exchanges her pout for a more contemplative expression. "He looks like a buff accountant, kero. Talk to him about exercise and academics. If you offend him, apologize."

Ochako sighs. "Tsu, you're a genius."

Tsu snorts, takes another bite from her bento. "Thanks, but I just say what I think." She shrugs, her shoulder brushing Ochako's. "You've got this. I believe in you. Plus Ultra, kero."

"Plus Ultra," she responds, getting kind of pumped. "Okay. I'm gonna go talk to him now." She stands up and turns to Tsu, who's looking up at her with a small smile. "You're going to be cool over here?"

Tsu nods. "I'll be fine. If it looks like it's going well, I'll go sit by Tokoyami, kero."

Ochako grins at her. "Okay! Then go sit with them, because it will definitely go well!"

Tsu nods again, and Ochako slips out of her seat to cross the cafeteria.

-

"Hey, Iida!"

Tenya blinks and looks up from his English textbook. It's... Uraraka

Ochako, from his class. And she's coming towards him, and has addressed him, so he stands and bows.

"Uraraka," he intones sharply, nodding. "What can I do for you?"

He sees her falter for a second and berates himself - he's said it too fiercely, again. But it's only for a second, and then she regains her bearing and smiles at him.

"Well, I was wondering if I could sit with you!"

He pauses. "Were you not just sitting with Asui?" He doesn't want to intrude on them, even if he doesn't quite know how he could. He's a cafeteria-length away from where they just were.

Uraraka falters again, and he sighs at himself in his head. Again, he's made her uncomfortable, and he doesn't know how to apologize for it. And yet Uraraka is not deterred by his awkwardness, and again she brightens and smiles.

"I was, but I wanted to come say hi! Tsu said she'd go sit by Tokoyami, so you don't have to worry about intruding."

Tenya nods appreciatively at her, and stiltedly gestures for her to sit. She does, and he sits as well. He got a booth seat by the window, so he is across from her.

She gestures to his textbook, and says, "What are you reading?"

He hesitates, and then steels himself. *If she asks, she's sincere*, he reminds himself. *This isn't Soumei, she isn't like they are*. "My English textbook. I was doing some studying before class - I don't want to be underprepared." He swallows, unsure if that could be counted as bragging or not; he doesn't want to offend her.

Luckily she doesn't seem offended. "Oh," she says, eyes catching the sunlight. "What part are you on? I looked over it a bit myself, but English isn't my best subject."

He nods. English isn't his best subject either, and he's lucky enough to have known Yamada-sensei outside of a professional setting - practice makes perfect, and Uncle Hizashi uses English liberally and without shame.

Tenya knows a shameful amount of English expletives.

"I'm on the chapter that discusses literary analysis of English classical works." He turns the book around and shows her the page he's on. "They're discussing the New Historicism view of Frankenstein."

Uraraka doesn't say anything. He worries.

Then, "Iida, you're really smart."

"I'm sorry?"

She looks up, eyes wide, and shakes her head. "Don't be! I can hardly understand any of the words in this! But you're reading this with no problem, you're super smart!"

Tenya feels a blush rising into his cheeks and tries to beat it back. "Um, thank you. I don't think I'm anything special, I just study a lot. I have family who specialize in some of our subjects." He looks away, swallowing. He doesn't mean to flaunt his status, he knows that his peers dislike it - always have, always will - but Uraraka and him shouldn't form any sort of relationship, friendly or not, under false pretenses.

"So you study a lot, huh? That's cool too!" Uraraka grins at him and he is struck by the genuineness of it. "You're smart because you work hard, not because you were born in a certain way. That's not something to be ashamed of."

Stunned, he can only nod. She points to a passage on the page. "So what does this mean?"

Stumbling to regain his footing, he leans over the table and begins to explain. "Well, that's an excerpt of the book it's talking about..."

-

The alarm is blaring and Hanta still hasn't finished his lunch.

"What the fuck," Denki says, panicked, as *everyone* in the cafeteria makes a mad dash for the exit. "Babe?" he hears them shout, as they twist in their chair to look for Mina. Hanta is sitting next to them, has a death grip on their hand, but Mina got up to use the bathroom. "Babe! Mina!"

As everyone else in the cafeteria loses their minds, Hanta pulls Denki up from their seat and to the wall. "She'll be fine!" he shouts over the shrieks of everyone else. "Don't panic!"

Denki turns to him, eyes wide and disbelieving. “Fucking, don’t tell me not to panic!” they shout in his ear, and he can barely hear them. “That’ll just make me panic more!”

“But will it actually though?” he shouts back, pushing them against the wall and bracketing them in to keep them from getting jostled by the mob.

“Uh, *yeah*, it will! If you tell me not to panic, I’ll panic even harder!” Denki frowns, more irritated than anything else, and Hanta grins at them. It’s working.

“But why would you panic if I tell you not to panic!”

“Because you make me focus on panicking, ding-dong!”

“But I’m telling you *not* to panic!”

“Yeah,” Denki shout-snorts, rolling their eyes, “like *that* would work! Telling me not to do something makes me want to do it more!”

“That’s what she said!”

“Dude, that doesn’t even make sense! Get your memes straight!”

“Why should my memes be straight if I’m not straight!”

Denki opens their mouth, hesitates, and levels a glare at him. “You’re distracting me, asshole! I’ve caught on to you!”

“Fuck you, goatman,” Hanta shouts in English, grinning wider when Denki’s face twitches in recognition. “This is my bridge now!”

Denki tries to keep the frown, *really* tries to keep the frown, but they break into laughter. “Hey there demons,” they shout, “it’s me, ya boi!”

There’s a shout over the din of the cafeteria, and they both turn to see Iida, hovering over the exit sign, yelling about alarm levels and social media. The cafeteria goes quiet, and then everybody sits down again.

“Okay,” Denki says, poking him in the stomach and ducking under one of his arms. “So Mina’s gonna be pissed.” Hanta silently agrees. “Also that was wack as fuck, so I’m letting you off easy this time. Next time you distract me with American cryptid memes, I won’t be so merciful.”

Hanta is about to ask what they mean by ‘merciful’ as they sit down

when he's attacked by wiggly fingers digging into his sides, tickling him until he's gasping for air and wheezing.

"Babe," Denki says to Mina, who's apparently come back. "You just missed mass panic and a flying Iida."

Mina looks, in Hanta's opinion as he lifts his head, looks way too put out about this news.

She gets detention for shouting, "Oh, for fuck sake!" at the top of her lungs, and Hanta grins as she starts to tell them why she's so pissed.

-

Izuku wakes up to a text on his burner phone, bleary-eyed but alert. He doesn't unlock his phone to read it, because it's from Dabi and it's just one word.

HereForYourUwUs

Today

"Damn," he whispers. "Guys, be careful."

Chapter End Notes

me, writing this chapter: I'm going to address classism and social stratification but only barely, in a blink-and-you-miss-it kinda way

also me: haha denki and sero meme team

Come tell me how it was in the [discord](#)!!

Next chapter is... USJ!! Hope you're excited, because I have absolutely no idea how it's gonna go!! It'll be up by August 12th, so see you then!

Chapter 27

Chapter Summary

The USJ

Chapter Notes

Three thousand words of me getting my ass whooped by English

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Dabi's least favorite part of today probably has to be watching Shigaraki and Kurogiri gear up for the UJS project, and it's only 8 am.

The day hasn't even *happened* yet and it already sucks.

"You're not coming?" Kurogiri asks, and he shakes his head.

"I'm too cute to kill kids," he drawls, lounging on the couch. His fingers are intertwined behind his neck, and his eyes are closed to spare him the agony of looking at Shiggy's face. He thinks better of it, and blinks over at the bar. "You're not cute, so I guess you can kill whoever you like."

Shigaraki glares at him. He scrunches his nose back.

"Shut up," Shigaraki mutters, looking away. He turns to Kurogiri, snaps, "Is everything ready?"

"Yes, Shigaraki Tomura."

Dabi levels a look at Kurogiri, who sighs deeply.

"Yes, my liege."

Shigaraki slams his fists on the bar and whips his head around with a wonderful, "Are you fucking *kidding me*, Kurogiri?"

Kurogiri sighs again, deeper, and gestures to Dabi with a shake of their head. "I apologize, but it seems he will not stop."

Shigaraki scowls. "Well... don't just listen to everything he says. You're a higher level than him, even if he *is* an S class."

"Giri-chan," Dabi croons, stretching like a cat over the sofa with a grin

pulling at his staples, “Shiggy cares about you! That's so sweet!”

Shigaraki's cheeks flush high in anger as Kurogiri's eyes soften, and Dabi chuckles.

“Sorry, sorry,” he says raising his hands in mock-surrender. Shigaraki bristles and Dabi's grin twists into something more sinister. “But I do have a favor to ask.”

Narrowed red eyes meet his own.

“What?” Shiggy snaps. “I'm not buying you more Endeavor memorabilia, you're just going to burn it.”

Fair enough. “Not that,” Dabi says, waving his hand in the air like he's swatting the idea away. “I just want a promise. Nothing too big.”

“Go on.”

Dabi's eyes glint. “If you see a boy with half-red, half-white hair, leave him alone. Don't kill him, don't hurt him too bad. Make sure the... *others* know that too.”

“Or what?”

Dabi's grin falls completely off his face. If Shigaraki's tone was a touch more arrogant, a touch less curious, he'd be a pile of ash, no matter what Harbinger had asked him to do. “Or I'll cremate them. All of them. And probably you, too. Don't fuck with him, if you wanna keep your little army.”

Kurogiri's eyes narrow, and Shigaraki tilts his head to the side. “Is this a part of that backstory I have to level up to unlock?”

“Bet your crusty ass it is. I'm serious.”

“Yeah, whatever. I'll tell them to leave any half-red-half-white-kids alone. I can't supervise them myself, but they'll know what the punishment is.”

“Oh, Handjob,” Dabi sighs, touching the back of his hand to his forehead and draping himself over the armrest. “How shall I ever repay you?”

“Don't die before I find a place to use you.”

“Ooh, keep talking to me like that and thing's might... *heat up*.”

The glare Shigaraki gives him is wildly satisfying.

“Kurogiri, we’re leaving.”

“Yes, my liege.”

“Kurogiri.”

“Yes, my liege?”

A noise of disgust makes Dabi snort. “Just. Just take us to the warehouse.”

Kurogiri nods. A warp gate opens, and Shiggy steps through.

Dabi is alone in the bar.

“Fuck,” he laughs, rubbing at his face. “Be careful.”

At this point, he doesn’t quite know who the statement is directed towards. It hangs in the air all the same, and presses down on his chest.

“Be careful.”

-

“Kurogiri, warp us to the USJ.”

“Yes, Shigaraki Tomura.”

“Do you.” He pauses. “Are you just going to do that around him?”

“If you don’t mind it. It is good for you to have someone to talk with who is not me.”

“I... I don’t mind talking to you.”

“I am aware, Shigaraki Tomura.”

He pauses again. Then, softly, “Good.”

-

Momo heavily dislikes the atmosphere on the bus.

She’s sitting next to Kyouka — and what a thrill it was to receive permission to call her by her first name! — but it doesn’t quite make

up for the oppressively quiet cloud that shrouds the face of their teacher.

The others have noticed it as well.

Ashido's group is reliably rowdy, but their energy has a frantic edge to it she doesn't usually see. Kirishima and Bakugou sit in the back; and while Bakugou is sullen on a good day, his shoulders have risen and his eyes dart around as if looking for an enemy that she can't see. Kouda, Uraraka, and Asui (Momo would call her Tsu if she had that type of confidence, but she... doesn't) all sit together, and while she doesn't know sign, she can see that their movements are more subdued. She can't read Tokoyami, Shouji, or Satou, and Aoyama is regaling a pained-looking Tenya with what seems to be a story about glitter. Ojiro and Hagakure are sitting behind her, talking quietly.

Her gaze lands on Shouto and Shinsou, who sit closest to Mr. Aizawa. Of all the people on the bus, they seem the most likely to know what's going on, if only because Shinsou is Mr. Aizawa's child and Shouto is his friend. Alas, it looks as though they hold tension without direction as well.

She's at a loss as for what to do, and it manifests as tiny silica beads pooling in the hands she's folded on her lap. Kyouka, next to her, is softly humming something she doesn't recognize.

"Hey," her seatmate nudges her with a grin. "Chill out, yeah? Everyone's just nervous 'cuz it's our first field trip."

Momo's shoulders relax of their own accord and she throws a bashful look at her... friend. "Are you-are you nervous as well?" She peeks at Kyouka through her eyelashes like her mother taught her and is inordinately pleased by the faint flush she sees on her cheeks.

"Hmmm. Maybe? I'm definitely nervous, but I'm also super excited, if you get what I mean."

She looks around at her classmates and nods absent-mindedly. Privately, Momo believes that the cause of this tension is something more, but she doesn't have any evidence for that so she takes Kyouka's explanation easily.

She turns and meets dark eyes. Smiles. "Yes, I get what you mean."

Katsuki doesn't know what the *fuck* is making him feel like this, but the second he finds it, he's blasting it into the fucking sun. Fuck what Hound Dog says about processing emotions, because the last time he felt like this it was the day after that shit-dicked Slime asswad shoved its sewer gelatin into his lungs and he's *never* going to feel like that again. Not if he can help it.

Firetruck hair — *Kirishima*, an annoying voice in his head reminds him — is sitting next to him, prattling on about something Midnight said in class. He's not paying attention, because he's gotta find whatever the fuck's causing his chest to tighten, but the incessant chatter is, for once, not annoying as shit.

It's probably just residual relief that the voice isn't Deku's. He'd take a lot of people chattering at him over Deku chattering at him, and of all the people he knows, Kirishima is the least aggravating.

Take that for emotional growth, furbag, he thinks at an image of Hound Dog in his head. *There's an entire person whose existence doesn't grate on my nerves.*

Katsuki's eyes flit around the bus, never resting on one spot for long. There's nothing suspicious to latch onto, and it's really pissing him off. Kirishima shifts as he's talking, and his knee bumps into Katsuki's knee and stays there. It's grounding, as much as he'd never admit it, so he doesn't shout at him to move it the fuck back.

Instead, he focuses on the feeling of the seat beneath him, the solidity of having another body next to him, the noise of the bus that's nothing like the panic of others watching him drown, doing fuck all to stop it because they're not "strong enough." Doing nothing because they're all fucking *weak*.

He grits his teeth and keeps looking around.

The bus pulls to a stop in front of a huge dome of reflective glass that hides whatever's inside. Since he's at the back of the bus in an aisle seat, he gets off almost last. Kirishima is behind him, the *only* one behind him, and the hairs on the back of his neck rise at the thought of someone where he can't see them, putting him into a situation where he's vulnerable.

Where they can grab him, and he can't do shit about it.

He sneers his way off of the bus, away from the extras, and faces what better fucking be USJ — he's not getting back of that shitty bus again

— with determination set deep into the furrows of his brow. Kirishima comes up to stand next to him, with acid-lube and her posse.

“Hey, Bakubro! You ready for some rescue practice?” Kirishima’s grin would probably be infectious, if Katsuki were paying attention.

He scoffs, lip curling. “Of course I am. I’m good at everything I do, rescue work is nothing.” He cracks his knuckles, not taking his eyes away from his reflection in the glass.

Portable battery charger grins. “Concrete can’t pin a civilian if you explode it,” they say, snickering, and he silently agrees.

No, it fucking can’t.

“Alright,” Katsuki hears Mr. Aizawa call. He turns to look at his homeroom teacher, who’s as dead-eyed as always. “No.13 is in there, waiting for us. This is rescue practice, not combat practice, so listen to everything they say. I’ll assign essays — *plural* — to the idiots that don’t.”

Katsuki scowls, shifting his weight. He wants to go in and work already, not wait around and listen to a lecture that he doesn’t need to hear. If one of the extras is stupid enough to need to hear that they shouldn’t fuck around in a rescue simulation, they should fucking leave. There’s no room for mistakes in shit like this.

Mr. Aizawa shuffles through the group to the doors, holds them open, and jerks his head. “In,” he intones. Katsuki is the first through the doors, ignoring the uncomfortable prickling of eyes on him. That’s where they should be, no matter how much he dislikes it.

He’s supposed to be in front, he’s supposed to be the first.

His eyes land on No. 13, who stands on a cobblestone plaza.

“Welcome,” he hears them say calmly. “I’m here to teach you how to use your destruction to save others.”

-

Hizashi is tapping his fingers silently against his leg, anxiously waiting in the shadows of the USJ. Waiting for a text from his husband, saying it didn’t work, or his boss, saying it didn’t work, or the police, saying it didn’t work.

He hopes it works.

Their plan is to send the kids to a different section of the campus, and they've done that. They should be arriving just about now, and he flicks his eyes over to where he knows Snipe is perched. He sees a little glint of light, an acknowledgement of his gaze, and flicks his eyes back to the plaza — where they think the League will land. He keeps tapping his fingers, keeps looking around at where he knows his coworkers are hidden. Feels sick to his stomach, because he *doesn't know* if his husband and son are safe right now.

There's a change in the air.

The pressure change makes his ears pop, and he tenses in alarm. The faint scent of ozone reaches his nose and he swallows, because it's game time.

There's a dot of nothingness in the center of the plaza that grows, going purple at the edges while the void in the middle stays the same. A person steps out.

Hizashi catalogues them in his head, nails digging into his leg. *Average height, thin, masculine physique, hands obscuring face, pale hair, hunched stance.* He digs through his brain for a name as more villains pass through the void. *Shigaraki Tomura.* From Harbinger's report.

The figurehead of the League of Villains.

More villains come out, little more than hired thugs. The only other character of note is the one who controls the void-portals, who Hizashi identifies as Kurogiri. Again, from Harbinger's report.

He blinks once, eyes zeroed in on the leaders of the group as he gets in the zone, waits for the signal. All Might should be showing up soon, if nothing's gone wrong.

The villains look around the USJ, and Hizashi sees Shigaraki getting visibly agitated. If only he could read his lips, but there's a... there's an entire severed hand over the guy's face. He doesn't know what to make of that.

Kurogiri doesn't have a face, ergo no lips to read. He doesn't know what to make of that, either. It seems like less of a fashion choice there, though, so he hedges a guess that Shigaraki might just be that way.

He hears an aggravated shout, and another void opens. Hizashi sucks in a silent breath as what he would call, in any other situation, an absolute *unit* steps out of the void. As it stands, he's going to label it a monster. Because it is.

It's huge, purple, and it's got an exposed brain in a head that makes his stomach churn. It's massive. He cannot stress how ridiculously large it is, how small it makes him feel in comparison.

"Use the Noumu..." he hears, patchy through his hearing aids, "kill All Might...."

He sucks in a breath and holds back a giggle as he thinks, deliriously, *We're gonna need a bigger boat.*

That thing — the *Noumu* — is here to kill All Might. He doesn't think it can, but thinking and knowing are two different things and there's no room in heroism for that kind of gap.

The void closes. The entrance to the USJ opens, and Hizashi looks at the imposing figure of a beefed-up Yagi Toshinori against the light of the outside.

"I AM HERE," he hears, booming in his ears, startling the villains. A gunshot rings out. A villain falls. Hizashi sucks in a deep breath, and gets to work.

-

It's pandemonium. There's a policeman somewhere next to him, shouting orders that he drowns out with a scream.

In front of him, a villain drops, ears bleeding.

The ground shakes.

Shouta, your day better be going so well.

-

A roar that drowns out his own.

A yell from All Might in the ensuing silence, and the ground *roils*.

Hizashi stumbles, and earns a clip in the jaw for it.

Hitoshi, you better kiss Midoriya before I die. I deserve grandkids, and Eri

is just as cute as you were.

-

He's panting, the edges of his vision blurring. His lungs burn and his throat hurts; his ears are ringing and his hands are shaking.

He looks to the plaza, where the Noumu is down and All Might is looking worse for the wear. Not, of course, that the villains can tell.

But Hizashi is closer, now. He can see the way Yagi is shuddering, grappling with his self control to keep the power-up. It'll have to be enough.

He hopes it's enough.

Shigaraki turns and Hizashi tenses.

"Kurogiri!"

A breath in.

"Yes, Shigaraki Tomura?"

Aim. Hold.

"Take us away!"

Release. A relieved sigh.

Shigaraki turns to glare at them and Hizashi represses a shiver. That's a lot of bloodlust for one dude. "We'll be back," he hisses, and steps into the nothingness. Hizashi watches as the void disperses, leaving the plaza empty. Takes a breath. Lets it out. Takes another breath. Puffs his cheeks out. Opens his mouth, and-

"Hoooooooooooohmygoodness," he yells at the ceiling, shoving all his leftover nerves into one exclamation. He shoves his hand in his pocket, grabs his phone, and slams his thumb on Shouta's name. A click, and then Shouta's voice filters through.

"How'd it go?" It's deadpan and Hizashi heaves another relieved sigh. Shouta is normal, everything is fine.

"It went well," he replies easily, slipping his strained voice into a cheerful cadence. "There was this huge monster they called a 'noumu' that was difficult, but All Might handled that perfectly well. The rest

of the villains were mostly just hired thugs, so the police handled most of them.” He pauses for a breath.

“And?”

“And... Shigaraki Tomura and Kurogiri were there. They withdrew before we could apprehend them.”

There’s a quiet on the other end of the line. Hizashi waits for Shouta to share his thoughts, and leans against a tree. He hears kids shouting in the background, and a tired smile pulls at his lips. *Oh, to be young again*, he thinks. They’re all so full of energy.

“I see.”

Hizashi hums. “What are you gonna do?”

“Talk to Naomasa,” is the blunt answer he receives.

“And then?”

“Talk to Harbinger. This won’t happen again.”

He nods at nothing, and waves away a paramedic.

“Sounds good. I’ll see you later, at home. Tell Hitoshi I said hi!”

“Kay. See you at home.”

The phone call clicks off, and Hizashi grins at the young woman hovering nearby with a first aid kit. “Sorry about that, I’m all ready now! I think my jaw got the worst of it, yeah?”

The woman smiles at him, and he closes his eyes as she dabs at his face with an antiseptic wipe.

That went... well. Won’t happen again, indeed.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you for your patience, everyone! I’m not an action writer by any measure, so sorry for the lack of whoop-ass in this, but I hope you enjoyed it anyways.

This chapter mugged me in a side alley and stole my money. It was a mess to slog through, but I finished it! Next up: some good good Eri fluff uwu

Meet me in the pit in my [discord](#)!

Next update should be out by the 30th!

Chapter 28

Chapter Summary

In which Shiggy gets, like, two lines, and the rest is me baking vicariously through Eri.

Chapter Notes

Me, writing Shigaraki: He has no lips! How will he get a kiss kiss??!!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“How did this happen.”

It’s not a question, but Tomura still scrambles to answer it.

“It was a setup. The heroes were waiting for us, they *knew* we’d be there. They wiped us out, decimated our mob. Stole the Noumu. Shot at Kurogiri and me.” He scratches irritably at his neck, seething at the insult. His nails catch on the dry skin and he doesn’t flinch at the warmth of blood that smears on his fingers.

“You think that Giran’s information was false?” Sensei’s voice is dry and emotionless, and Tomura’s free hand curls into a fist as his mind whirls, searching for a way to say what he thinks.

“Not false,” he mutters. “Everything went the way it was supposed to, up to our grand entrance. Giran didn’t lie. Somebody else just watched him closer than he watched himself.” He looks up at the monitor.

“Sensei.”

“Yes?”

“There’s a person I want. He can tell me what I want to know. He can make sure we don’t fail again.”

“Well then. You have my full support, Tomura. By all means, I am interested in seeing the direction you take us.”

Tomura sucks in a quiet breath. “Yes, Sensei. I won’t disappoint you again.”

The monitor goes dark, leaving Tomura alone in the bar, sitting curled

up on a stool. He pulls his hand away from his neck, looks at his fingers. They're red. He curls his hand, uncurls it. Looks at the bar blankly.

"Harbinger," he says to himself. "You'll help me. You won't have a choice."

-

The best person in the world is Eri's Papa.

She wants to be just like him, wants to help people like he does. Like she knows he's doing, when he puts on his dark clothes and slips out the window next to hers. Her bed is right near the window — Papa put it there so she wouldn't ever feel trapped by the darkness again.

She wants to help him help people. She just has to figure out how to *tell* him that. He's never mean about it, never snaps at her for it, but his eyes flit off to the side when she asks about where he goes when he goes out. He "dodges" her questions — a phrase she learned from Hiichan — by saying they'll talk about it later, saying that he has something he needs to do right then.

So she has paused on asking, and instead she's going to *show* Papa that she can help.

By making a cake.

All by herself.

It's a perfect idea. Even though she's never baked by herself before, she's helped Papa enough to know where everything is. Not only that, but Papa has been teaching her to read hiragana (even if she can't quite make her fingers write it yet), so she can mostly read the recipe pinned to the fridge.

She starts by making sure the oven is empty. It always is, because they always make sure after Papa turns it off, but it's better to be safe than to be sorry (another phrase she learned, this time from Shoucchan). She pulls the oven door down and peeks in, then shuts it when she's satisfied. She looks at the counter, hesitates — because the counter is *tall* and Eri is *not* tall, how's she going to get up to where the oven controls are? She narrows her eyes at the counter's edge, chews on her lip as she thinks about her problem.

A lightbulb goes off in her head, and she scampers to the bathroom,

where her stool sits right in front of the sink. She picks it up, wraps her arms around it so it doesn't get dropped, and pitter-patters back to the kitchen. She sets the stool in front of the counter *next* to the oven, climbs up onto the counter, and presses the 'Bake' button. A beep, and then she blinks, because there are flashing numbers on the little screen. Realizing she doesn't know what the temperature should be, she hops down and steals a look at the recipe.

175.

She climbs up again, and the numbers aren't flashing anymore, so she pauses, then presses the cancel button. She'll start again, that's fine. So she presses 'Bake', then makes the numbers say 175, then presses 'Start'.

Now the oven is preheated, and the hardest part is over.

Now, she gets to mix things together.

Eri grins, proud of herself, and looks at the recipe again. It's one of Mrs. Inko's, so that means lots of butter and lots of sugar. She reads over the paper, making sure she knows all the steps before she gets anything out. That's something Papa taught her to do, so she can make sure she does everything the best way for her — because if she needs to use one ingredient twice, it won't do her any good if she puts it away.

She doesn't think she's a good enough baker to grease a cake pan, so she fills a muffin tin with the kitty-cat cupcake liners and calls it good. Then, she grabs a big mixing bowl, Papa's electric mixer, and the scale. She puts all of those on one spot on the counter, then goes to the pantry and opens the door.

Pantry, she thinks, clenching her fist like Ash from Pokémon, *I'll defeat you!* She grabs the sugar and the flour, then the vanilla and the baking powder, making two trips because her arms aren't as big as Papa's; she can't carry as many things at once.

She shuts the pantry, then scoots her stool to stand in front of the fridge. She opens the fridge, and pulls out the milk, setting it near the pantry-things but not with them. Then, the butter, next to the milk, then the eggs — one in each hand — and she's done with the fridge. She moves her stool back, humming the Pokémon theme song in her head, and clambers back onto the counter.

"Bowl on the scale," she sings quietly, making up a tune as she acts

out her words. “Make the scale go to ze-ro! Sugar in the bowl, the bowl on the zero scale, then butter! In the! Bowl!”

She pulls the bowl off the scale and puts it into her lap, then twists to plug in the mixer. “Mixing time,” she hums, and presses the beaters to the bottom of the bowl. She turns it on, and is immediately taken aback at how much the mixer *doesn't* want to do what she wants it to do. She has to press down with all her might to mix the sugar and the butter, and she wonders if she maybe should’ve warmed up the butter? Or made it smaller? But it’s too late now, so she’ll just have to remember that for next time.

The sugar and the butter are mixed now, so she moves onto her next enemy.

The eggs.

Eri is... not good at cracking eggs. They always either don’t crack as much as she needs, or completely go splat and get shell in the batter. And then, her hands always get covered in egg-goo, so she has to wash them while Papa mixes them in for her!

This time cannot be like all the other times, because Papa isn’t up here and she’s a big girl. She can do this by herself.

She sizes up the first egg, and grabs it. Uses her free hand to steady the bowl, then-!

She gets it! It cracks right down the middle, and splits easily without making a mess! She almost, *almost* cheers, but settles for a squeal instead, and tosses the eggshell into the sink. Just one more, then she can move on. She holds her breath, takes the other egg and-!

Yes! The egg goes perfect again, and she puffs her cheeks up in the effort not to shout her joy. The cake is going to be *perfect* and it’ll be for Papa and they’ll eat it and be happy! *And* Papa will see that she’s a responsible and he can tell her what he does and how she can help.

She mixes it again, and this time it’s easier because of the eggs. She measures out the vanilla and makes everything smooth, then puts in the flour and what she *really* hopes is baking powder. The oven beeps, startling her, and she starts on her song again.

“Mix-ing the flour in-to the other stuff, mix mix mix, mix mix mix! Make it smooth, then put the milk in, even if it’s hard to mix now, it won’t be la-ter! Mix mix mix, then stop mixing, measure the milk-”

and she pulls the mixer out, sets the bowl on the scale, and measures out the milk, “-and mix it more!” She turns on the mixer, then, just for fun, turns it on the highest setting. She makes sure to push the beaters into the bottom of the bowl so they don’t splatter everywhere, and giggles at the way her hands vibrate.

“Perfect,” she says to herself, once everything is smooth. She turns off the mixer and pulls it out, setting it on the counter.

“Spatula for the cupcakes,” Eri sings, hopping off the counter and opening the baking drawer. She roots around in it some, not quite tall enough to see over the top, and feels her hand settle on something that feels like the thing she needs. She pulls it out, smiles because she was right, and climbs back onto the counter.

Very carefully, because this is a really important part, she grabs the bowl and tilts it over the first muffin liner.

“Not all the way to the top,” she whispers to herself, remembering Papa’s instructions from when they made cupcakes together. “Half and then a drop more.”

She overfills it.

But that doesn’t matter, because that one can be hers. So she moves onto the next one, and gets it right. And then the next one, and then the next one, until she’s using the spatula to scrape the last of the batter into the last muffin liner.

She counted them perfect, and her smile is so big she almost can’t see. She puts the spatula into the bowl, pops the beaters off the mixer, and puts everything next to the sink. The oven is ready, so she grabs Papa’s oven mitts and puffs out her cheeks, squinting her eyes as she opens it. A burst of hot air puffs at her face, but her eyes only water a little bit, so it’s a win. She slides the muffin tins in carefully, making sure to not bend over the oven door, and closes it. Then looks at the recipe, looks at the oven clock, and says, quietly, “20 minutes.”

Eri takes the mitts off, grabs one of her coloring books, and sits down at the table.

-

“Eri, bug, it’s okay. It’s a good surprise, I promise. You did really well, they look super yummy, it’s not a problem. And I’m glad you told me, before trying to take them out yourself. You could’ve gotten hurt.”

Eri snuffles. "I wanted to show you I was grown up. So I could *help* you."

"Oh, Eri," he says, cheeks red and eyes bright. "You don't need to prove yourself to me - although those cupcakes *do* look very good - because I already know that you're responsible. You're a very big girl, and I'm proud of you."

"But you won't tell me why you go out, or what you do, and I can't do anything," she whispers tearfully, looking at a blurry Papa. It settles like a stone in her stomach, the feeling of being useless. She doesn't like it, doesn't want to feel like she did when she was with... them.

But Papa shifts and sits on the floor next to her, smiling softly even though his eyes look sad. He extends a hand and she grabs it, hugs it.

"I was just trying to figure out how to explain it to you," he says, soft and warm. "I'm sorry that I made you feel like you can't do anything, because that's not true at all." He tugs on her hand once, gently, and looks up at her. "Sit with me?"

She nods and crawls into his lap, curling up and resting her head against his chest. It's a good spot to be, because it's warm and she's safe.

"I wanted to make sure I can explain everything in a way that makes sense before I told you. Because..." Papa rests a hand on her head and smooths her hair. "Because the things I do aren't allowed. When I go out, I break a lot of rules. You've seen the news, do you know about the two kinds of people they show on there?"

She nods. She likes watching the news, because she gets to see the good guys beat the bad guys.

"Well, the two kinds of people are heroes and villains. I'm... well, I'm not a villain. I don't have a quirk, so I don't meet the requirements for villainy. But sometimes when I go out, I have to work with villains."

Eri understands that Papa goes out to do good things, and that he has to work with people to do things. She can't do everything by herself, she has to ask for help sometimes. But she also doesn't understand, because her Papa isn't a villain. She knows about villains, knows that they're bad people who do bad things. Her Papa doesn't do bad things, and he's always nice to her. He's her hero.

"I work with heroes, as well." That makes sense to her. "My job is to

know things.”

“Papa’s good at that,” she says immediately, looking up at him. She’s startled a laugh out of him, and a warm, fuzzy feeling eats at the uselessness in her. “You always know what to say to make people feel better.”

It takes a second to form, but Papa’s smile is like the sun, and she bumps her head against him. “Thank you, bug. I’m really glad to hear that.”

“Mhmm.”

“Okay. So my job is to know things, right?” She makes a small noise of acknowledgement. “Well, other people also want to know things. We trade - I give someone something they want, and they give me something I want. Usually, all they have to give is money, but sometimes I want favors. In case I get into trouble, then I can ask them to help me.”

Eri approves. Papa should have people there to help him when he’s in trouble, and if it isn’t Eri then it should be someone he knows.

Or a villain. They’re powerful and scary, they can protect him. But Father was a villain, and she doesn’t want anyone like Father near Papa *ever*. And... Papa is strong. It would take a lot to make him worried about himself, because he spends all his time worrying about other people. So he won’t get in trouble for just anything - and as far as she knows the worst thing he’s done is get rid of Father, and he hasn’t gotten in trouble for that.

Not that he *would*. Papa did a good thing, when he got rid of Father. He... got rid of a villain. Like heroes do.

“The place I work is pretty far from here, and I have some friends but they don’t know who I am. All they know is that I know lots of things and that I’m their friend. Eri.” Papa’s voice rests like a blanket, and she shifts her head away from his chest to blink up at him. He’s making his serious face, so she listens close.

“What I do is not allowed. If people found out that it was me, I would get in serious trouble. So we gotta keep it a secret, okay?”

She nods. She’s never kept a secret before, so she’s not sure if she’s good at it, but she *really* doesn’t want Papa to get into trouble.

Papa's serious face melts into his soft, calm face and he gives her a smile she immediately returns. "Don't worry too much, okay? It's a super easy secret to keep, because people don't ask about that stuff. And if someone asks you about what I do, you don't have to answer them. Just come and find me, okay?"

"Mhmm." Eri fiddles with her fingers as she runs over what Papa just told her. It's easy to remember.

"Oh! I almost forgot!"

She blinks at him.

"You wanted to know if you can do anything to help, right?" She nods, sucking in a slow breath of excitement. "Well, your quirk training is going well, so I was thinking that when I come back with bruises, you can start trying it out on me. I trust you with that, and I'll be there to help you." His smile grows. It feels like frosting tastes, which reminds her of the cupcakes on the counter. "Other than that, your job is to stay safe. Okay?"

"Yes. Can we have cupcakes now?"

"Well, that depends. Do you want to decorate them first?"

Eri hums, turning the question over in her head. She wants to decorate them, but she also wants to eat them right away. Papa sees her struggle, because he's good at knowing what she's thinking, and taps her nose gently.

"How about we each eat one now, and then we decorate the rest? Hiichan and Shoucchan-" Papa stops, draws a sharp breath, flushes red, and Eri giggles. "Eri," he says gravely, voice not matching the color of his cheeks, and she giggles harder. "Eri you can't tell him I called him that." Her giggles turn into a full laugh, and Papa scrambles, covering his face with his hands. "Eri. Eri, I'd die. I would die and I wouldn't ever be able to revive, I would never be able to show my face to anyone ever again. Eri. Eri."

She's not listening. She's too busy laughing, catching her breath, looking at Papa, and laughing again.

"I'm telling Shoucchan you called him that," she says when she gets her breath back, and he gasps.

"Betrayed!" he cries dramatically, pulling his face from his hands.

“I’ve been betrayed! Someone, anyone, avenge me!” And with that, his hands dig into her sides, wiggling, and she shrieks with surprised laughter. She tumbles out of his lap, squirming and laughing as he tickles her.

“O-okay,” she wheezes, “stop!”

Papa’s hands pull back immediately, and she lies on the floor for a second. Then she lifts her head up, looks at Papa.

“Cupcakes?”

“Cupcakes.”

Chapter End Notes

Hi! So! I know this is late. This is, like, super late. Turns out when I take a shot of that old depresso espresso, I lose all motivation! And then I lay on the couch for a couple of days, watching the news and playing games on my phone and not writing! But then I pickled some radishes, bought my college books, and took a bit to work myself back up and now we have this! Hope you liked it!

Parenting advice from someone who doesn't have kids: When you have kids and you play with them, especially when you do physical things like play-wrestling and tickling, if they say "stop" you should stop immediately. It teaches them that their bodies are to be respected, that other peoples bodies are to be respected, and the importance of saying "stop" when something gets to be too much for them. Consent is important, and teaching it from a young age is always a good idea.

Two chapters to go!! Good news is I have most of the next one completed already (if you know, you know) and so that shouldn't take too long! Then it'll be the last chapter, and we can move into the next installment!! I am. Very excited about the next part of the series. It's gonna be very fun for me. So the next chapter should be out by the 24th.

Come say hello in the [discord](#)!! I'd love to say hi!! We're friendly!!

Chapter 29

Chapter Summary

In which I am at once both kind and terribly, monasterously cruel to Eri. Chapter is shorter than usual, next one will be longer.

Chapter Notes

You guys, last chapter: that was so cute!! Love to see it, Eri's the best, hope nothing bad happens!!

Me: I'm about to end this man's whole career

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Shouto enjoys spending time with Eri. She is small, smaller than the people he is used to, but that's because she is young.

But she's smart. Even better, she's clever.

And she doesn't hate him. Or judge him based on his father's merits.

So he is attentive when she approaches him, tiptoeing in a way she usually does not. She leans on the armrest of the chair he's sitting in and motions for him to come closer to her, so he does. She lifts a tiny, very small hand to his ear, and whispers, "Papa called you 'Shoucchan'."

He blinks. Tries to process why this is important, because obviously it is. Acknowledges that he feels more warm than he did a second ago, and flicks his eyes to where Shinsou and Midoriya are talking at the counter. His cheeks heat up.

Ah.

But... Shinsou has a crush on Midoriya. Shinsou had a crush on Midoriya *first*. This is what Fuyumi and Natsuo call 'dibs'. Shouto should respect this.

He also does not want to respect this.

Two people can have a crush on the same person. That's the basis of almost all of Fuyumi's books.

One person can have a crush on two people. He read that on the

internet.

So, logically, three people can have crushes on each other.

(He read that on the internet too.)

He blinks down at Eri. Nods once, and she nods back with the same solemnity.

“Thank you for telling me,” he says.

“You have to call Papa ‘Izuku’ now,” she says back. “It’s the rules. He calls Hiichan ‘Hiichan’, he called Shoucchan ‘Shoucchan’, Hiichan calls him ‘Izuku’, so you have to call him ‘Izuku’ too.”

A beat.

“Would he be okay with that?” He shouldn’t presume.

Eri blinks at him. Opens her mouth. Closes it. “Wait here.”

She scampers over to the counter, and tugs on Midoriya’s sleeve. He crouches down, disappearing behind the counter, and Shouto hears a squeak and a giggle.

Eri scampers back to Shouto’s chair, and Midoriya is visible again, face red like a tomato.

He is not looking at Shouto.

Eri is smiling.

“He says it’s fine.”

“Okay.” He blinks. Feels his face move in an unfamiliar way. Eri’s eyes go wide.

“Papa! Papa, Shoucchan smiled! Papa look!”

-

It’s the middle of a chilly Wednesday, and they’re making muffins. Well. Eri is making muffins, because she decided that cupcakes were just the start of her baking by herself. Izuku is trying to decide how to broach the subject of school.

But either way, he’s upstairs in the kitchen with her when he feels it -

the drop in pressure, the slight scent of ozone in the air.

His mind stops. There's a second of nothing, of blankness and processing and silence, and then he grips Eri's shoulder very suddenly. She turns to face him, a question on her lips, but he cuts her off. There's no time.

He shoves his phone into her hands, and makes their sign for *hide*.

Hide, hour, talk Mr. Aizawa.

Her eyes go wide with terror, and her breathing speeds up.

Hide in her secret spot, wait an hour, then call Mr. Aizawa.

"Eri," he hisses, eyes insistent, and then she's running into the hallway and he's on her tail - he needs to get to the office.

He wishes he had more *time*.

He pulls open the door and flings himself at the space next to the desk, where the waste bin rests. He flips it over, pulls the bottom out, and grabs one of the tiny ampoules. Shoves the fake wood bottom back and slips the small glass container into his mouth, under his tongue.

After all, he'll only need one dose of the perfected quirk erasure serum if what he believes is happening is really happening.

He launches himself up, runs back into the kitchen, and spends precious seconds to finish pulling the muffins out of the oven when the tension snaps and the air pressure stabilizes.

"Midoriya Izuku," intones the solid voice of Kurogiri, and Izuku whips around to face him, feigning surprise and then fear as his heart races.

"What-"

"I am pleased to inform you," Kurogiri interrupts, "that you will be staying as a guest at the headquarters of the League of Villains."

And then Izuku is swallowed by a portal, dropped unceremoniously into a heap on a wooden floor, and looks up into the blank, cracked face of Shimura Tenko, alias Shigaraki Tomura, de facto leader of the League of Villains.

"Well well well, what do we have here?" Shigaraki sneers, and Izuku

shudders at the voice. It's like he's not all there, and Izuku knows that if he doesn't play his hand well, there's a good chance he won't make it out of here alive.

"I-I'm sorry," he whispers, making his eyes wide and his tone shaky. "I don't know why I'm he-here."

Shigaraki Tomura smiles, and his lips crackle.

"I don't care about you. *I* know why you're here." He leans closer to Izuku and he smells stale. "You're going to help us catch Harbinger."

Chapter End Notes

Before we get to your regularly scheduled chapter notes! RBG, better known as the Notorious Ruth Bader Ginsburg, has died. I am, in equal measure, devastated, enraged, and afraid. This is an awful thing, and I am afraid for both myself and the US as a country. I live in her America, and I don't want to not live in her America. I don't know what to do with myself or my emotions over this. All I can say is may her memory be a blessing.

Another bit of news. I start college on Monday. I have no idea how this will affect my writing schedule, as I have never attended college before. This will be a learning experience for all of us (lol haha). I will keep writing, because there is little else I can do, but it might be longer between updates. Or not, because I literally have no basis for what college will do for me. Please note that I won't be attending in person, all my classes are strictly online. Practice social distancing. Thank you for your understanding.

Now onto the usual chapter notes.

Oh my god it'll be okay don't freak out. Remember: I promise happy endings. Everything will be okay. If something truly terrible were to happen, I'd've tagged for it.

Now on the other hand: uwu come yell at me in the [discord](#) uwu

Next chapter will be up by October 3rd!

Chapter 30

Chapter Summary

The aftermath

Chapter Notes

I got excited so you guys get a chapter early!! College is scary but I'm doing well!!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Shouta gets the call in the middle of class.

The entire class goes quiet as his phone beeps - something that doesn't *happen*, because he keeps his phone on silent for every contact that isn't immediate family. He locks eyes with Hitoshi, who looks confused, and pulls his phone out of his pocket.

The call is from Midoriya.

He flips open his phone and holds it to his ear.

"Hello?"

"*Mr. Ai-aizawa,*" hiccups a small, clogged voice, and it's Eri.

"Eri," he sees Hitoshi shoot up, and motions him to sit back down, "what's wrong? Why are you calling me?"

There's a sob, and a snuffle, and then, "*Somebody took Papa!*"

His blood runs cold. He feels his pulse skyrocket as a dull roar in his ears blocks out everything but the voice of the little girl on the other end of the phone.

"*He told me to hi-hide and wait to call-call you, but they took him, Mr. Aizawa! Plea-please help!*"

"Eri, I'll be right there. Stay where you are, okay? I'll be right there, I promise. Just, just *stay there*, don't move. Okay?"

Another muffled sob. "*O-okay.*" Then the call clicks off.

Shouta is out of the room in seconds, running down the hallway. Class

is in session, so there's no one in the halls that he has to shove out of the way, which is a blessing. He shoots a text to Hizashi, telling him where he's going, but not why.

He skids to a halt in front of one of the security cameras, looks directly at it. "My class needs a sub. I won't be back today, somebody's been kidnapped. Sorry for my absence."

The security camera beeps twice and he's off again.

-

Naomasa gets a call.

"Yes?"

"Midoriya has been kidnapped. Eri just called me. I'm headed to the café right now, meet me there."

Nao is quiet for a second as he processes.

"Okay. I'll be there."

The call clicks off.

He gets up and starts walking to the door, grabbing his coat and hat. Sansa perks up from where he's sitting on the break room counter, coffee in hand, and tilts his head to the side.

"You going somewhere?"

"Yeah, and so are you. There's been a kidnapping. Come on."

Sansa scrambles off the counter. "Shit, okay, let's go!"

Naomasa nods and shoves himself out the door, a sinking feeling in his gut. Why would anyone take Midoriya? Why leave Eri? What happened? Will there be a ransom? He needs to contact Mrs. Midoriya, but how will that go when she's out of the country? Fuck, who's going to look after Eri? The foster system is busted to hell, and she doesn't have any family living in Japan.

Most kidnapping victims don't make it back alive.

Sansa's face is grim as he slides into the passenger seat of the squad car. Naomasa knows exactly how he feels.

A click, the turn of a wrist, and they're off.

-

Eri's hiding place is a secret. Papa told her to keep it a secret, so she does.

When Papa told her about his hiding place, he gave her a list of things to look for. Small. Easy to get out of. Dark; or, at least, not bright. Not obvious. Not the first place someone would look.

Eri clicks the 'lock' button of Papa's phone again, and the light from the screen illuminates her face. It's only been... two minutes since she looked at it last. Mr. Aizawa should be here soon. She hopes he gets here soon.

The screen is a picture of her and Papa, at the park, smiling. Her eyes tear up again, and she sniffles desperately, trying not to cry again. Crying doesn't help.

Papa cries a lot.

She wants him back. She misses him, and it feels like her heart is being crushed by a fist. Her hands clutch at the phone like it's him, like she can drag him back to her.

She tries to make her lungs work like they should, like Papa taught her when she had her first big panic. In four, hold seven, out eight. Again. In four, hold seven, out eight. Again. She unclenches her hands from the phone and instead sinks them the tail of her braid.

The braid Papa gave her this morning, when it was quiet and not awful and everything was going to be okay forever and ever and ever and nothing was going to go wrong and everything went wro-

"Eri?"

Her breath hitches. *Mr. Aizawa.*

She scrambles to uncurl herself, to unfold herself like one of the kitties she sees on the sidewalks, and tumbles out of her hiding place and onto the floor. She grabs the phone and shakily gets up, wobbles to the door and opens it. Sticks her head out and looks into the hallway.

Sees Mr. Aizawa in the living room, alone and just standing there.

She shuts the door behind her. He turns, and his eyes look like Papa's

do when he sees something sad. She hiccups, once, and he crouches slowly. Opens his arms a little.

“Hey, kiddo.”

Eri sobs. *Wails*, because she doesn’t know how to keep everything she’s feeling inside anymore, and pads over to Mr. Aizawa and shoves her face into his black sweater. She can’t even pretend he’s Papa, because his hugs are different, but he still curls his arms around her back and pats her head.

“It’ll be okay, kid,” she hears distantly. She’s not focusing on him right now, not focusing on anything. She feels like she’s being ripped apart, but this time she can’t do anything about it because it’s not her arms, it’s not her legs, it’s her *heart* and everything is caving in on her. “We’ll find him.”

She chokes out another sob.

She misses her Papa.

-

Hitoshi doesn’t know what the fuck is going on and he *doesn’t like it*.

Oh, he could give two shits about what’s going on with Ashido and her gossip mongering, and Bakugou can go fuck himself with a cactus, but Dad just bolted out of the classroom after saying, *out loud and in front of everyone*, that Eri was on the phone with him and she was in some sort of trouble. Everyone is freaking out.

He locks eyes with Todoroki, whose face is shuddered in a familiar form of non-expression. He tilts his head slightly, eyes narrowing, and Todoroki rises slowly. Hitoshi gets up himself, and brushes by Yaoyorozu as he shoves himself into the back corner of the room.

“I don’t know what that was,” he says lowly. Todoroki nods. “If I get anything out of Dad when he gets back, you’ll know.” Todoroki nods again.

“... Thank you.”

He nods back, and glances at the rest of the class. Ashido and her posse are hovering around Kirishima’s desk, and for some reason Bakugou is with them. Shouji, Tokoyami, and Asui are all over by Uraraka and Tenya, and the rest are just sitting in their spots, looking

lost.

“Shinsou.”

He looks at Todoroki, tilting his head back a bit. “What’s up.”

“... Do you think Izuku is okay?”

Hitoshi swallows. He... he doesn’t know. He really, honestly doesn’t know. He says as much. “I’ve got no clue. I hope so. Maybe he just fell down and got knocked out or something, and Eri panicked.”

Todoroki nods.

Neither of them believe it.

-

“I couldn’t contact his mother.”

“Fuck.”

“Yeah.”

“She can stay with me. We’ve got enough room, and she knows us. Just until we get him back.”

“And if we don’t?”

“Don’t say shit like that.”

“... Sorry.”

“No, I’m sorry. If... if we don’t get him back, we’ll figure it out then. Keep trying to contact his mother.”

“Okay. You’ll start on the investigation while I get everything ready?”

“Yeah. I’ve got a few places I’d like to start with. I’ll let you know when I’ve found something.”

“Alright. Keep me updated.”

“Will do. Later.”

“Good luck.”

Chapter End Notes

uwu how'd you like it? I'm starting on the next part as soon as this is posted, so be on the lookout for that! It's going to be called [Access] and we're gonna get some more of feral Izuku!!

In all honesty, I'm super glad that I finished this book! I'm extra excited for the next one, and I hope you guys will continue with me on this journey! I read all the comments, even if I don't reply to all of them, and I thank you all for your incredible support. Seriously, this is for you guys. Ahhhh!!! I'm so excited!!!!!!!!!!!!

Come say hello on our [discord](#)!!!

[Access]'s first chapter will be out by or before October 12th.

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